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THE LAND OF THE SUN:

SKETCHES OF TRAVEL,

WITH

Memoranda, Historical and Geographical, of Places of Interest in the East,

VISITED DURING MANY YEARS' SERVICE IN INDIAN WATERS.

BY

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PREFACE.

AT the suggestion of friends—themselves authors of eminence, some of whom, during lengthened service in the East, have acquired an intimate knowledge of the places treated of in this volume—the writer, with some diffidence as to the reception that may be accorded to his literary venture, has been encouraged to publish these papers, some of which have already appeared in an abridged form in the columns of an old-established military magazine.

At least they have the merit (such as it is in these days of universal travelling and writing) of not being the crude lucubrations of a *voyageur*, who can boast the limited knowledge acquired by a run ashore while the

steamer is coaling, or by having paid a flying visit of a few days, or it may be weeks, to the scenes which, on his return home, he depicts at length, with all the self-sufficiency of a sciolist, in a pretentious work of Travel.

In the proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society, and of its kindred association at Bombay, the contributions from the officers of the late Indian Navy, placing upon record their observations and discoveries in Indian seas, and the interesting and ancient countries whose shores are laved by those waters, form not the least important and instructive chapter in the annals of those learned societies. As a humble follower in the footsteps of Haines, and Wellsted, and Ormesby, the author of the succeeding sketches craves the indulgence of a lenient public.

Regarding the method of treatment, it should be stated that as the places treated of in the following pages were repeatedly visited by the writer, it has appeared to him to be more advisable to adopt the plan of describing them in isolated chapters than in the ordinary form, that of a connected narrative. It is not intended, therefore, that the volume should be classed among regular works on Travel, with which, indeed, the author deprecates comparison, but as a collection of descriptive sketches of places

with which he is intimate. The series is commenced with Aden, a fortress appropriately termed the "Gibraltar of the East," and which it does not require the prophetic gift to enable one to predict will, before many years, resume its ancient proud position as a great emporium, its capabilities only limited by the small extent of the peninsula available for commercial purposes.

The Suez Canal has opened a new era for Aden and Perim, and, indeed, for all the ports of the Red Sea; and it is impossible to exaggerate the mighty future in store for them, when the trade of the East and the West flows through the channel constructed by the genius of M. De Lesseps, and when European capital and enterprise is directed to open up the resources of surrounding countries, and create fresh customers for the markets of Manchester and Birmingham. Harbour improvements are urgently needed at Aden to render it largely available as a coaling station and general *entrepôt*, and these, doubtless, will soon be undertaken under the auspices of such an enlightened administrator as the present Secretary of State for India, his Grace the Duke of Argyll.

Nor is it less probable that the inhabitants of the shores of the Persian Gulf and the Arabian littoral will awake from

the long sleep of ages, and run a fresh course of commercial greatness, when they have learned to appreciate western civilization, and, through the medium of the canal, to avail themselves of its manifold benefits.

Regarding the important question of the extinction of slavery on the east coast of Africa, which is referred to in the succeeding pages, it should be mentioned that by a former treaty with the Sultan of Zanzibar, the export of slaves by sea from his dominions was entirely prohibited. Subsequently, in 1867, an agreement was come to that not only the export, but the transport of slaves within the dominions of the Sultan should be prohibited during the first four months of the year, as it was during those months that the Arab slave-dealers repaired to Zanzibar for the purpose of procuring slaves for sale in the Persian Gulf. The agreement also authorized our cruisers to seize all vessels carrying slaves between January and April inclusive.

During the past year, a committee appointed by Lord Clarendon assembled at the Foreign Office, at which the four departments of the India Office, Admiralty, Colonial Office, and Treasury, were likewise represented, and the Committee also had the advantage of the presence of Mr. Churchill, Her Majesty's Consul at Zanzibar. It is under-

stood that these gentlemen have made their report, which, it is said, contains valuable suggestions for the ultimate entire suppression of slavery. Most devoutly is it to be hoped that the Government will adopt these recommendations, if they are of a judicious and effective character, and so put an end to a scourge on the east coast of Africa, which, it is one of our proudest boasts, has been extinguished through our instrumentality on the west coast of that continent.

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I.

Aden: and some Account of an Expedition against Lahadj.

IN the unbroken chain of British outposts that girdle the globe, the military station of Aden forms one of the strongest links, and a sketch of this most interesting place, which may at some future time play no inconsiderable a part in the great struggle for supremacy in the East, will interest the general, as well as military reader; for it is not impossible that, "some day," in the natural order of things mundane, that complicated and many-sided enigma, known as the "Eastern question," may once more come up for consideration, and, ogre-like, have to be appeased, for a further term of years, by the copious effusion of blood.

For upwards of three years the writer was attached to one or other of the ships of war of the late Indian navy on the Red Sea station, and as Aden was the head-quarters, he had ample means of acquiring a knowledge of its capabilities.

Aden, which forms an excellent half-way house between

Bombay and Suez, has been frequently likened to Gibraltar, to which, indeed, when viewed from a distance, it bears a great resemblance, both on account of its enormous strength and its rough outline; however, like many other general resemblances, the fancied likeness vanishes on a closer survey, for Gibraltar is situated at the foot of its precipitous cliffs, while Aden lies in the hollow of an extinct crater. This resemblance struck Sir Charles Napier, who, while on his way out in India, in 1851, made a note in his diary that Aden was "a strong place, easily defended. Stronger than Gibraltar, as being flanked by an island."

Officers and others journeying out to India may pass through Egypt, even through Cairo, without being much struck by the sight of anything around; but there is that about this strange mass of rock that projects so grandly into the Arabian Sea that must arrest the attention of the most unobservant or unimpressible of passers-by.

Howard Russell, the *Times* correspondent in India during the mutiny, wrote of it amusingly enough. I shall transcribe the passage, as it is a good specimen of the picturesque style of this prince of "special correspondents."

"Early this morning, saw in the distance a line of crags, like sharks' teeth, rising out of the water. These resolved themselves into sharp saw-back ridges of rock, cliffs, and peaked mountains, of rich rufous and Vandyck brown, streaked with red and black, as we approached. Surely

here are Vulcan's workshops! Here Brontes, Stereopes, and Pyracmon have cleared out their cinders since the days of Saturn; here are the dust and ash-heaps of the Cyclopean forges. Not one little tree—not one blade of grass—not one patch of verdure the size of a man's hand! The eye seeks the summit of those tumuli, in expectation of the smoke of the subterranean fires in which those rocks were melted and cast out in beds of scoriæ and ashes. The blue sea seems actually to fizz at the base of these tremendous hills of slag, and to boil and splutter as it heaves against them. High in the air, on the top of the highest peak, a flag is flying from a lofty staff. The old Union Jack is flaunting a welcome to us; a house which looks like a child's Noah's ark can be detected near the staff by the curious. Round by bluff and sloping sheets of ashes, we glide swiftly; here and there white straight lines run across the ravines, which seem to topple over us. These resolve themselves into walls of solid masonry. Tunnels and archways are seen high up amid the crags. A round building of stone-work, with black specks on the flat roof, looks very like a fort; and see! as we round the point and run into the shallow bay before us, there is another house, from which the dull black eyes of the cannon are staring right at you. The bay holds some half-dozen merchantmen, most of which show French colours; a flotilla of Arab dhows, an odd-looking steam-sloop, and a small armed schooner. The

cinders seem to have been shovelled away to form this bay. Before us there is a row of three or four white houses, one story high, thatched with reeds, rising out of ashes, and backed by mountains of cinders. Here and there the cinders rise in cones over the bay, and on the top of those cones are perched some half-dozen isolated houses; one or two huts on the beach complete the public and private buildings of the port; but the military station is perched in an extinct crater, about three miles away, where it is nearly as hot as if the volcano were in full activity."

To Admiral Sir Home Popham, who visited Aden in 1802, belongs the credit of having been the first to call the attention of the Indian Government to its advantages both in a commercial and political point of view. The present town is built on the ruins of the ancient one, on a plain three miles in circumference, and is described by Dr. Wilson, in his "Lands of the Bible," as "ensconced in an amphitheatre of rocky mountains, literally in the crater of a volcano."

What first strikes the visitor, as he surveys the promised land from the decks of a Peninsular and Oriental steamer or government transport, is the rugged promontory that juts boldly out into the sea, forming certainly the most remarkable feature on the south coast of Arabia. This rocky headland is called Jibbel Shamsham, from the turreted peaks on its summit. It is of limestone formation, the most elevated point being some 1,776 feet above the sea. It

extends five miles from east to north, by three miles in breadth, and its southern point is called Ras Sinailah by the Arabs, and Cape Aden by us. Numerous rocky points project from Jibbel Shamsham, forming an anchorage for small native craft.

In the cool season—pardon the expression, I mean the season when life is perhaps supportable—some of us more energetic midshipmen used to scale the dizzy height of Shamsham, take luncheon on the small plateau at the top, where, in a comfortless hut, perched on the very brink of the precipice, two native signalmen resided for the purpose of repeating the "number" of any merchantmen, or firing an old six-pounder, or burning a blue light when the mail steamer hove in sight. All the way up the rugged path on the side of old Shamsham there were to be seen the remains of ancient fortifications and other buildings; the road is built in a zigzag direction about ten to twelve feet broad, and was constructed many centuries before our occupation of the place.

Two miles to the east of Ras Sinailah is Ras Marshigh, which forms the south-eastern extremity of the peninsula of Aden. The next point of importance is the small fortified island of Sirah; it commands the eastern bay and town of Aden, is of a triangular shape, and some 600 feet in height. The island is half a mile long, by 600 yards broad, and at low water, owing to the filling up of the sand, it is

connected with the mainland. When the British conquered Aden, there were some ancient fortifications on the summit of this islet, which have since been greatly strengthened, and also three reservoirs of water. The anchorage on this side of Aden is unsafe, owing to its being totally unprotected from the easterly winds; but from June to August, during the prevalence of westerly breezes, it forms a good harbour, having from five to eleven fathoms of water.

The chief port is round on the western side of the peninsula, and is formed by the projecting headlands of Jibbel Hasan on the mainland, 1,237 feet high, and Jibbel Shamsham on the peninsula. This anchorage is called Bander Tuwayyi by the Arabs, though among us it is known as Aden Back Bay. It is about eight miles broad from east to west, and four miles long from north to south. The entrance between the two extreme points, called Ras Salil and Ras Tershein, is exactly three miles and 750 yards wide. These promontories enclose a truly magnificent bay, in which a large fleet can anchor with perfect safety. On the Aden side there is an abundance of water, some five fathoms deep, but it shoals towards the mainland, where it leaves a large sandy flat at low tide. The tides are strong and irregular. Connecting the peninsula of Aden with the mainland is a narrow isthmus, known to the Arabs as Darub-el-Arabi, and somewhat less than 1,000 yards in width. By this all the supplies are brought from

the neighbouring country, and it is a pleasing and picturesque sight to watch the long train of camels defiling into the town. The isthmus is very strongly fortified, and, like the Main Pass, or Bab-el-Yemen (the Gate of Yemen), which gives ingress to the cantonments from Steamer Point (as the harbour side of the peninsula is called), is always held exclusively by a detachment of European troops. The Bombay sepoys, who form the greater portion of the garrison, keep guard over other posts; but these two positions, as being the only vulnerable points in the defence of the town nestling at their feet, are guarded by white troops only.

In an old map there is laid down a causeway connecting the peninsula with the mainland, from which there can be little doubt that the former remained an island until a very recent date.

There is a small island, not far from the landing-place in Aden Harbour, or Back Bay as it is also called, known as Flint Island or Sheikh Ahmed, where we used to drill our men and go through the manœuvres of effecting and repelling a landing of an enemy. The sailors were at one time armed with cutlasses, and were supplied with several rounds of blank ammunition for the mimic fray; but they grew so animated in the mock business, that on one occasion a regular free fight ensued; several men were injured, and one midshipman nearly lost his arm through some sort of projectile fired by one of the seamen, and which tra-

versed the limb and necessitated his ultimate return to Europe. After this the sham-fights were discontinued.

Captain Haines, of the Indian navy, the first political resident at Aden, communicated in 1839 an interesting paper to the Geographical Society, on the peninsula of Aden and the south-west coast of Arabia, to which I have made reference. Within the Gulf of Aden—by which I mean to indicate the waters between the meridian of Cape Guardafui and Bab-el-Mandeb—easterly and north-easterly winds may be expected during the first three months of the year. The thermometer then ranges from between 70° to 80° Fahrenheit; the weather is fine, and there are occasionally slight showers, though sometimes years elapse without a drop of rain falling to relieve the arid character of this parched-up rock—without a blade of grass—on which so many of our countrymen are condemned to while away some years of banishment. In April and May the wind is generally from the southward and eastward; in the former month the weather begins to get warm, the thermometer showing a temperature of about 86°, while in the month of May the heat is excessive, ranging in the shade between 90° and 100°. The dews at night are very heavy. June is an unsettled month, though still very hot, and in July and August there are often thick fogs, but no cessation of heat. September is very sultry; long periods of calm prevail, and the mercury, so constantly consulted by the per-

spiring British officer, still shows a medium of 95°. The rest of the year it is much cooler, and life may be said to be endurable—it can never be enjoyable—in this "God-forsaken" peninsula.

During the south-west monsoon the wind blows out of the Red Sea in a southerly direction, and at Ras Assair, or Cape Guardafui, it blows with considerable violence across the Gulf of Aden.

The great work to which reference is so often made in books of modern travel, relating to countries adjacent to Aden, is the "Periplus Maris Erythræi." The object which its author proposed to accomplish is very similar to that which Horsburgh has in more modern times performed. It treats in plain unaffected language of the ports of the Red Sea, Eastern Africa, Arabia, Ceylon, and India, and of the commerce of each, and is a treatise that must have been of great service to the merchant sailor of the olden times. The "Periplus" has been always ascribed to the historian Arrian, and bears his name, though learned men differ as to its authorship and the exact date of its publication. It is in this same work that the author speaks of Adule, or Adulis, a Greek settlement situated in Annesley Bay, near to which, during the recent Abyssinian campaign, were landed the British troops, who rivalled by their discipline and valour the famous martial race that have given an additional interest to this obscure spot. The site of the ancient

Adule, the ruins of which were discovered by Rüppell, is now well known under the name of Zoulla, and is some thirty miles to the southward of Massowah.

Little authentic appears to be known of the early history of Aden. Ptolemy speaks of a place which he styles Arabiæ Emporium, on account of the whole trade between India and Egypt passing through it, and the author of the "Periplus" states that a little before his time, Arabia Felix (as the town, as well as the district in which it was situated, was called) was destroyed by the Romans; from which it may be inferred that he wrote his work early in the third century, for the legions of that nation penetrated to the extreme south coast of Arabia in the reign of the Emperor Severus, in A.D. 198 or 199.

The learned Dr. Vincent, in his "Commerce and Navigation of the Indian Ocean," writes of Aden as follows: "The capture and destruction of this city a short time previous to the author's (Arrian's) age, would be a natural consequence of the progress and extension of the Roman commerce from the Red Sea to India; and as Claudius collected a tribute from the maritime towns of Arabia, it is natural to suppose that he was the Cæsar mentioned in the "Periplus" who ordered this place to be destroyed, for the purpose of suppressing every power that might interfere with the Roman commerce, or divert a share of it into its ancient channel. It is true, this must have been an act of oppres-

sion upon Charibael, who was the ally and friend of the Roman emperors; but far greater sacrifices of their justice to their ambition occur in the history of those sovereigns of the world."

It is to be presumed that the Romans occupied the peninsula after first destroying the settlement, for in the fifth century it was the Roman emporium for the Indian trade.

Captain Playfair, the Assistant Political Resident during the term that Major-General Sir W. M. Coghlan, K.C.B., was in civil and military command of the station, has, I believe, collected and published in the form of a book a good deal of information regarding Aden, though I have not had the advantage of perusing his work. From other sources I have gathered the following particulars of its history since the time of the Romans.

Aden or Eden, which is the Arabic term for the emporium of the happy Arabia, is supposed to have been founded, and was certainly ruled by the Himyariotes, a Pagan dynasty, which, after ruling for centuries in Yemen, was, at the birth of Christ, in rapid decline. These princes, it would seem, covered it with magnificent buildings, mosques, and baths, the relics of which were explored two hundred years ago, and erected the little forts, the ruins of which still crown the hills. Even in A.D. 572, the place was still powerful enough to require and execute the gigantic reservoirs formed by excavations in the solid limestone rock, and which are so

stupendous that, some forty years ago, it tasked the strength of English engineers to clean them. These reservoirs, fifty in number, will contain, it is estimated, thirty million gallons of water—a most valuable supply in case of an attack from the sea by a superior naval force. Such magnificence in works of primary utility bears evidence to the former commercial greatness of Aden, a greatness that will, without doubt, be exceeded by the importance it is destined to acquire in our hands as the emporium of trade in those waters, and the key to the Red Sea.

The Peninsula was conquered in 525 by the Abyssinians, then, as now, ruled by a Christian dynasty. Of the three Christian bishoprics which existed in Yemen before the birth of Mahomed, Aden was one, the others being Nejerau and Dhafar.

This dynasty, however, lasted only fifty years, being expelled in 572 by the Persians, who excavated the magnificent reservoirs. The Persian satrap, who ruled in Yemen, was almost independent, and became one of the earliest converts to the creed of the Prophet.

Captain Playfair asserts that one of the Lords of Yemen, whose capital was at Aden, crossed Turkistan, invaded China, and left a colony of 30,000 Arabs in that distant country, which certainly seems an unparalleled feat of arms.

Lieut. Wellsted, in the 2nd volume of his "Travels in Arabia," states, that in the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth

centuries, Aden maintained an extensive trade with India and China, and was then the entrepôt of the riches of the East. In the thirteenth century Marco Polo, who visited Aden, found it under the authority of the native Imaum, who, he writes, had sent 3,000 or 4,000 camels to assist at the siege of Acre in A.D. 1200. In the sixteenth century the town appears to have reached the height of its greatness. In order to maintain the trade against the Portuguese, the great pioneers of geographical discovery in the East, and then in the palmiest days of their naval supremacy—for they had rounded the cape of storms, and made their appearance in India—Sultan Gury, the last Mameluke sovereign of Egypt, and the Sultan Soleiman the First, called the Magnificent, took possession, in 1530, of the various ports in Arabia, and passing the Straits of Bab-el-Mandeb, obtained possession of Aden by treachery, the Turkish Admiral, Isliman Pasha, hanging the hereditary Sheikh at the yard-arm of his ship. To dispossess the Turks of these acquisitions, the Portuguese equipped a naval force under the renowned Albuquerque, who, however, no sooner saw Aden than he perceived the difficulty of conducting any operations against it. The result justified his anticipations, for he was eventually compelled to retire without having made any impression on it.

Aden rapidly declined from this date. It owed its greatness and importance to the fact that eastern trade flowed

through Egypt into the flourishing republics of Genoa and Venice; the discovery, therefore, of the route round the Cape inflicted a blow, from which it did not recover until it fell into our hands.

Between 1566 and 1574, during the reign of Sultan Sélim the Second, a revolt broke out in Arabia, which eventually led to the entire expulsion of the Turks from Yemen, and the re-establishment of the Imaums, whose capital was at Sanaa, near the Straits.

As usual, however, the Mussulman *régime* destroyed civilization, and dynasty plundered dynasty till the entire province was divided amongst petty chiefs, whose sole bond of union was their love of plundering each other and the world.

In 1728 the chief of the Abdali tribe of Arabs contrived, by a little well-managed treachery and a few murders, to oust the Imaum, and secure for himself a separate sovereignty, comprising the district of Lahadj, and the Peninsula of Aden. At the time Niebuhr travelled in Yemen, between the years 1730—40, he mentions that Aden had become independent of the Imaum, whose authority, however, was still supreme at Mocha, and over Yemen generally.

The first act of sovereignty of the Chief of the Abdali was to ruin the port by the most unbearable import duties, which drove away all traders, and speedily reduced the town to a petty village. While in this miserable plight, the once prosperous Aden was sacked over and over again by hostile

tribes, principally the Foudhelis, until the inhabitants, reduced to utter destitution, took to piracy. The change of matters saved the last remains of the population. Matters could by no possibility become worse, so they mended.

In the year 1837 the pirates robbed a pilgrim ship laden with Indian devotees, among whom were some native ladies of influence. The Bombay Government demanded immediate reparation for the outrage, and as the trade of the Red Sea was increasing, offered to purchase the peninsula of the then Sultan, El Hasan, an indolent, almost imbecile, potentate, who resided mostly at the town of Lahadj, situated some eighteen miles to the north-eastward of Aden. The Sultan consented, and on the 23rd of January, 1838, completed the bargain for 8,700 German crowns a year. The agreement having been signed, the noble savage —after the manner of his kind—refused to comply with any of its items, and fired on a British ship without warning or provocation. This was too much to stand tamely, and as at that time the anti-annexation fever had not broken out, and as the Governor-General was something more than a Secretary of State's clerk to register his political acts, a force was fitted out at Bombay to seize the town, "vi et armis."

At this time the Abdali tribe numbered some 10,000, of whom 1,000 warriors made preparations for the defence of their stronghold. The squadron consisted of Her Majesty's ships Cruizer, 16 guns, and Volage, 28 guns, Captain Smith,

who was senior naval officer, and in command of the expedition, the Hon. East India Company's corvette Coote, of eighteen guns, the schooner Mahé, a mortar boat. There were also some transports, carrying the troops commanded by Major Baillie. These consisted of 300 men of the 1st Bombay Fusiliers; 350 men of the 24th N.I.; 40 European Artillerymen; 60 Native Artillerymen and Pioneers.

The expedition arrived off Aden on the 16th January, 1839. The same evening Commodore Smith received a letter from Captain Haines, the political agent, informing him that all negotiations on his part had failed; the Commodore then communicated with Major Baillie, and they decided on attacking the place forthwith. The 17th was spent in drawing up the plan of attack, and in making preparations. On the morning of the following day the squadron weighed, and proceeded to the front of the town. On standing in towards the island of Sirah, which flanks the town, a fire was opened on the Volage with musketry and several large guns.

As the corvette Coote and the transports had not yet arrived, she hauled off and anchored for the night. On the morning of the 19th the Commodore made the signal to attack, and the troops were directed to be held in readiness to land in two divisions; at half-past nine the Volage anchored with a spring on her small bower-anchor at about 300 yards distance from the lower battery on the island of

Sirah, and at the same time the schooner Mahé took up her position to the southward of the island.

On first standing in, the enemy opened fire with their great guns and musketry, but the frigate being laid so close to the shore, the guns on the heights were rendered useless, and the shot fired passed over the squadron. At ten o'clock the Cruiser anchored and opened on the flank of the shore battery, doing good execution.

During this period a heavy fire was kept up from the shore, but in a short time two of the guns in the lower battery were dismounted, and most of the gunners were driven from the remainder; they, however, took shelter behind the ruins of the batteries, and kept up an incessant fire of musketry on the squadron. The Arabs in the lower battery, although it was nearly knocked to pieces, fought their guns with great obstinacy. At this period fire was opened on the tower and batteries on the heights, which were filled with men armed with matchlocks, and in the course of an hour this tower, though eighty feet high, and strongly built, was a mass of ruins.

About eleven o'clock the corvette Coote anchored with the second division of the troops, to the southward of the island of Sirah, and opened upon the town with her 32-pounders. Finding the firing had not ceased from the lower battery the Commodore directed the little Mahé to proceed to the end of it, and endeavour to drive its defenders from behind

its protection by musketry. This service, Captain Smith says in his despatch, was performed by her commander, Lieutenant Daniels, in a most gallant manner; and her executive officer, Mr. Nesbitt, midshipman, was severely wounded.

The firing having now almost totally ceased, Captain Smith gave directions for the boats of both divisions to land. Lieutenant Dobree, who had charge of the first division, Mr. Rundle, mate, and a quarter-master of the Volage, were the first on shore, and made for a 68-pounder, still worked by some Arabs. A matchlock was fired at the quarter-master, who immediately cut his assailant down, and Mr. Rundle then planted the ensign on the soil of Aden, the first time the old flag ever floated on this now world-renowned spot.

So completely were the enemy driven from all points, with the exception of the island of Sirah, that the whole of the troops landed with the loss of only two men killed and three wounded. As a partial firing was still kept up from the island, the Commodore directed a party, consisting of Lieutenant Dobree, who had returned to his ship, Messrs. Stewart and Rundle, mates, with a party of seamen, and Lieutenant Ayles, with some marines, in all fifty men, to land and take possession of it. This was gallantly accomplished, the party ascended the heights, spiked and dismounted the guns, seized the flag which had been flying from the tower, and made prisoners of 139 armed Arabs, who were conducted from the island to the peninsula. On an attempt being

made to disarm these and others of the prisoners by the soldiers, they made a most desperate resistance, and several lives were lost on both sides. A large number of the tribe fell in the defence of their chief city, among them the Sultan's nephew, who commanded at the island.

The number of pieces of ordnance captured was thirty-three, among them three large and most curious Turkish guns, which had always attracted the attention of travellers, and are described in Wellsted's work. They are pierced to throw 68-pound balls, and are of the following dimensions: the longest, eighteen and a half feet in length; the second, seventeen feet; and the third, fifteen feet, seven inches. On it is written the name of Soleiman ibn Selim, 901 (A.D. 1523). They are covered over with Turkish inscriptions, now almost undecipherable. Captain Haines is of opinion that they are relics of the rule of Soleiman the Magnificent, and that they were brought here in 1530 by his fleet.

Mr. Wellsted visited Aden shortly before its capture, and he speaks in dismal terms of the state of decay to which everything had been reduced. All that remained of the former city were a few minarets, about 100 houses, and some disjointed remnants of its walls, the rest of the space being occupied by tombs, mounds, and heaps of rubbish, roofless walls of older dwellings, or the wretched habitations of the present residents. The minarets, four in number, were, like all else, in a state of complete decay.

To give an idea of the baneful influence of the Arab rule, and of the blessing we have conferred upon its inhabitants, and mankind in general, by our policy of annexation, I will only remark that whereas at the time of its conquest it contained a population of 600 persons, of whom 250 were Jews, 50 Banians, and the rest Arabs of the Abdali tribe, within a period of five years, or to speak exactly, on the 2nd June, 1843, Captain Haines, the Political Resident, wrote to Admiral Sir Charles Malcombe, the Commander-in-chief of the Indian navy, as follows :—

"You will be pleased to hear that Aden continues to increase, and that supplies of all kinds are plentiful; indeed, everything can be obtained. The population is about 22,000, instead of 600, as in former times. It is a busy, lively place, and trees and gardens are springing up on all sides. How different is all this from its former condition! One can hardly realize that a few years of beneficent British rule could have done so much."

At the present day Aden has a population that can be little under 40,000, and it presents a scene of unwonted animation for an eastern town. Crowds of Arabs and Soumaulies, now "clothed and in their right mind," roam about the peninsula, and are as amenable as any European to the civil power, while the eye is struck with the long lines of Parsee shops, with their prosperous greasy proprietors, "doing" at the same time their customers and a

roaring trade, or sitting at their doors at "dewy eve," having "done" the above, and all this under the protecting ægis of British power, which does not exact one rupee for the safety to life and limb and property it ensures. Such substantial evidence of prosperity in a country where no man was safe from murder or robbery, and where the administration of justice was made the medium for bribery, must tend still further to increase the population and enrich the community of Aden.

Our occupation of the place has not been continued without constant hard fighting and alarm. During 1840 several desperate attempts were made to wrest it from our grasp, though they all ended in failure. Fortunately the garrison had been increased early in the year from 900 to a total of 1,800 men.

The first attempt was on the 20th May, when a body of about 500 Arabs, who acted as a kind of advance guard of 4,000 or 5,000 more of their tribe, nearly succeeded in surprising the garrison; but the vigorous fire that was directed upon them compelled them to abandon the attempt.

On the following 5th of July they made a second effort. The attack was made, as before, very early in the morning, but the Commandant got scent of the intended affair, and the redoubts and breastworks poured upon the Arabs such a destructive fire that they fled, leaving 150 dead behind them. Soon afterwards a body of about 200 of them, who

had advanced too far, were surrounded, and made prisoners. Now a singular scene ensued. Their leader and his band immediately sat down on the ground, but, on an attempt being made to disarm them, they rushed among the soldiers, and fought with desperation, until their chief fell, when they seized his body, and, carrying it off with them, succeeded in effecting their retreat. As they flew they received three volleys, but they carried away all their dead and wounded, with the exception of one Arab, who was stunned by a blow and taken into the guard-house. Here he sat for upwards of an hour, when he suddenly started up, and drew from his side a long dagger, which he had hitherto concealed. The Arab then rushed upon the soldiers, and managed to wound nearly twenty of them, before they could despatch him with their bayonets.

The whole of the neighbouring Arab races were at this time inflamed with fanatical rancour against the hated Feringhees, and many fruitless attempts were made to drive the British garrison out. Indeed, from the time of our occupation, the cantonments and all therein have lived in a chronic state of war and rumours of wars with the surrounding hostile tribes. In turns Abdali (the dispossessed) Foudheli, Akraiba, Sherjebi, and other tribes gifted with names equally ancient and unpronounceable to those who have not had the advantage of an intimate acquaintance with Arabic, in turn, one or other of these "sons of Ish-

mael," these "children of the desert," have with desperate tenacity pitted their fanatical zeal against the calm valour of the Saxon lines man, and each and every time they essayed to capture the stronghold they have been foiled, oftentimes with great loss. Most of the earlier attacks were dictated by a fanatical impulse to drive out the infidel, but those of the last eight years have been instigated by the more prosaic and vulgar hope of plunder. Gradually the "noble savage" became less noble and more vindictive. His fiery valour was diverted from its original object of expelling the Feringhees, and so, falling on evil days, he turned his attention to "serving out" the garrison, by stopping supplies. Like Ancient Pistol, who, in deplorable plight, after his head had been broken by the despised Welshman, exclaims—

> "From my weary limbs
> Honour is cudgell'd. Well, bawd will I turn,
> And something lean to cut-purse of quick hand,
> To England will I steal, and there I'll steal."

So the once proud Bedouin chivalry thought no more of night attacks, but roused the ire of the good people of Aden by turning highwaymen, and seizing on the camels in the high road, just before they defiled through the fortifications of the isthmus. An Indian journal gives a singular reason for the depredations and cattle-lifting which, early in 1858, drew down a signal punishment on the heads of the offenders, the Abdali tribe.

The *Friend of India*, writing in the following year, says: "The reigning Sultan, Ali Mahsin, it appears, holds the British alliance in great honour; so high, indeed, is his appreciation of its benefits that he is anxious to keep them to himself, and, as the readiest means to that end, instigated the remaining tribes to perpetual war. Then when caravans had been stopped or Europeans murdered, our ally appeared, claiming reward and consideration for his efforts on our behalf. This policy, as original as astute, succeeded for years, till the Sultan, forgetting his discretion, at last revealed his secret end. The Political Resident had concluded an agreement with the Foudheli, so agreeable to the latter that they resisted all the Sultan's instigations to treachery, till Ali Mahsin, utterly enraged, began plundering on his own account."

Whatever may have been the cause, the result came unpleasantly home to all residents at Aden, as well as those in the ships of war stationed there, among whom was the writer of these memoranda. Caravans were stopped, the wells were taxed, and supplies confiscated, till our British patience was exhausted, and Brigadier Coghlan, the Political Resident and Commandant, resolved to chastise the insolent Sultan of the Abdali. In March, 1858, accordingly, an expedition started for Lahadj, his capital. It was composed of three or four companies of the 57th regiment, a wing of either the 18th or 29th, N.I., two guns, and a

detachment of sailors from the Honourable Company's ships then in harbour, commanded by the Brigadier in person.

The force, which started so as to appear before the walls of Lahadj betimes in the morning, defiled under the archway of the great gate which opened on to the isthmus, and swept past the guns which had for so many years successfully opposed their "horrid front" to the tribes of lawless Bedouins, which surge like an angry sea around the walls of that ancient fortress.

We carried three days' provision and water, and an abundant supply of ammunition. All hands, officers and men, were in the best of spirits, and looked forward with glee to the contest. After a tedious march through a sandy waste, with small patches of cultivated land dotted here and there, we at length descried the object of our attention in the distance. There, before us, were the minarets of Lahadj, the sun just glinting the gilt crescent on its summit, and dwelling lovingly on the bauble, as though loth to leave the only medium which reflected back its golden rays; and there, in the far distance, could be dimly discerned the thick mud wall which surrounds the town, and which was considered by the deluded inhabitants of sufficient strength to defy British artillery. We proposed to make a short halt to refresh the men after the long march, when we found our little brigade confronted by a large body of the enemy,

armed with muskets, spears, and swords, and supported by a considerable force of cavalry. They had come out to offer us battle, and we were not long in opening the ball. The guns were quickly brought to the front and unlimbered, and began to play upon the dark masses of the sable warriors, while the infantry were thrown out as skirmishers, and commenced a brisk fire. It happened that Her Majesty's 57th were armed with rifles which had just arrived from England, having been sent out to supersede "Brown Bess." The Minié rifle was unknown and unheard of in this part of the world, and we were afterwards informed that the Arabs opposed to us were filled with wonder at the range and accuracy of these weapons, and could not account for the casualties caused by our skirmishers as they picked off the troopers at 800 yards. The Arab infantry continuing to advance in spite of the severity of the fire, the skirmishers fell back in order, and formed to repel their advance. Our small force received them with a withering volley, and then swept down on their ranks with fixed bayonets. A detached party of the enemy now attempted a flank movement, and while striving to execute the manœuvre their cavalry charged down upon us; but the rapid and effective fire with which they were met by the well-disciplined native infantry regiment emptied so many saddles that these fiery horsemen beat a hasty retreat.

Not to enter into the various minute particulars of the

fight, which at no time could be described as strongly contested, the Arabs retired in pretty good order, and finally succeeded in reaching the protection of the walls of Lahadj. The guns were again called to the front, and commenced the operation of breaching. Two of them were employed firing round shot, and two throwing shell into the beleagured place. A breach was soon made, which the Engineer officers having pronounced practicable, the old brigadier ordered the "Jacks" to storm. It was fairly our turn. The blue jackets, who had all along chafed at the delay caused by the necessity of breaching, and who were expressing, in not very choice language, their strong desire "to fall athwart-hawse them niggers as stopped the grub," received the announcement with a ringing cheer, and were not long, I assure you, in showing "to the fore." The sailors had formed the reserve, and during the progress of the fight were placed in rear of the troops; but on being let loose they rushed between the two detachments of soldiers, and though several hundred yards from the walls, set off at the "double." In vain the officers urged the men not to be in such a hurry, as they would be winded before they could engage the enemy. No, the tars pretended they could not hear—"they had been long enough astarn the sogers," one old petty officer afterwards remarked; so, cheering lustily, they only increased the pace on nearing the walls. The result was that, instead of storming the breach in a compact

column, the blue jackets straggled up without order. All was made up, however, by their determination and ardour, and we were subsequently informed that the yells and reckless gallantry of the tars struck a regular panic into the ranks of the Abdalis.

The most active of the storming party—those who first reached the breach—were also the first to enter the town and cross bayonets with the foe. Some of the sailors, indeed, discarded the musket and bayonet, and drew the weapon which the British man-o'-war's man loves best, and knows the use of, too, so well—the naval cutlass, the form of which is still as old-fashioned as, let us hope, is the courage which inspires the men who now tread the decks once danced upon by their forefathers—the light-hearted, rollicking spirits who conquered under Nelson and Cochrane, and manned such craft as the *Saucy Arethusa*.

A few cannon shot were discharged at us from some ancient rusty pieces of ordnance, but the fire was wild, and no casualties occurred in our ranks from its effects. Pell-mell, helter-skelter, on went our fellows with their eyes fixed upon the shattered wall, but never counting how many pagans, "bearded like pards," there might be ensconced behind its protection. First and foremost, fleetest of foot, but as gaily fearless as ever was youngster under Benbow or Hood, there ran a midshipman, the son of the distinguished engineer officer who commanded in the trenches at Sebas-

topol. Young J—— was the life and soul of the middies' berth; every one liked him, even the stern, cantankerous disciplinarian under whom we once served together, and—"by the same token"—whose dog's hind quarters he once sacrilegiously shaved; for which offence, I may remark "en passant," he was gravely brought to court-martial, and reprimanded by the half-dozen jocose old pomposities who on a grilling day, with the thermometer at 110° in the shade, and attired in epauletted tail-coats, tightly buttoned up to keep the heat out, deliberated for some hours over their verdict.

This was the youngster who first jumped over the wall, cutlass in hand, and encountered an Arab armed with "tulwar" and spear. The middy, parrying a thrust with the dexterity of a practised swordsman, cut him down in almost less than no time, and, followed by some half-dozen sailors —"boarders," as they called themselves when talking over the event subsequently—plunged into the thick of the enemy, who, quite confounded at such temerity, actually gave way in spite of their superior numbers. We were all up within a few minutes, and the rout of the rascally Arabs was soon complete. The artillerymen, manning the few guns on the walls, and with which they had been keeping up a dropping but ineffective fire, fled through the narrow streets of the small town, and throwing down their arms, the rest of the Arab followers of the old sheikh followed

their example and sought safety in flight. Our triumph was complete. The troops marched in and took possession of the place. There were only two or three buildings that would not be classed as mean even in an Arab town, and these were the principal mosque and the Sultan's palace. No "looting" was allowed, but we made ourselves comfortable in the best quarters we could find.

The women and children were dreadfully alarmed, expecting nothing less than sudden death. But we soon reassured them, and they came out of their abodes to stare at the Feringhees who had routed their protectors, a contingency they had evidently not calculated upon as being remotely possible. Our casualty roll was very light, considering the success we had achieved. Not a man was killed, and only fourteen wounded, eight of whom belonged to the naval brigade. These all subsequently recovered.

The now crest-fallen Sultan sent emissaries to treat for peace. His proposals were generously met by the brigadier, who exacted a fine as a tribute for the expenses incurred—and which, more than any other punishment, would leave a salutary and lasting impression on the minds of his followers—and also an ample apology. The fine was immediately paid, and the haughty chieftain gave a written undertaking to abstain from further aggression. The demand for hostages, likewise made by the astute Political Resident, was acceded to, after a little demur; the Sultan

placed in our hands two of his sons as "material guarantees" that he would fulfil his part of the stipulations. We, on our part, then yielded the place to its rightful owners, and marched out with drums beating. That night we returned to Aden, and thus, in little more than twenty-four hours, the whole force, having successfully performed the object of the expedition, was safely in cantonments. All the officers of the expedition dined together the following evening, at the mess-house of the gallant 57th, and talked and laughed over some amusing incidents of the affair. Two of those brave fellows of the old "die-hards" have since fallen in New Zealand, one in action, and the other basely murdered by the Maories.

On one occasion, during Brigadier Coghlan's temporary absence from Aden, the Foudheli tribe "raised" a number of camels belonging to the residents of Aden, but they ultimately restored them. More recently, two expeditions have had to leave the peninsula, and chastise the recalcitrant Arabs.

Before the year 1866 was many hours old a column left Aden to engage the Foudheli, the most powerful of the neighbouring tribes. The force was composed of 500 men and officers, under Brigadier Raines and Colonel Merewether, Lieutenant Goodfellow acting as interpreter, while Colonel Woolcombe, commanding the artillery, went round by sea in the steamship Victoria, with a company of his men. During their absence Aden was defended by only 300

soldiers, and the civilians were rather alarmed that it might be captured by a *coup de main* from without, assisted by traitors from within; for among so large a population, containing so many heterogeneous nationalities, there must be disaffected people. This time our ancient foes, the Abdali, who had latterly been in the receipt of 600 dollars a month for keeping clear the road communicating with Aden, were in alliance with us, though they rendered no material assistance, preferring the safer part of the jackal that picks up the scraps left behind by the lordly lion.

After a march of sixteen miles, the land portion of the force encountered some Bedouin horse near a village, called in the report, Dogree. A collision here took place, and the result was that thirty-one of the Foudheli cavalry were killed and as many wounded. The native horsemen beat a hasty retreat after this defeat, leaving behind them fifty camels and a quantity of arms and baggage. The force proceeded on their march, and again engaged the Foudheli at Bir Said, where the enemy feared to face the Armstrong guns, and were defeated with the heavy loss of 140 killed and wounded. Our allies the Abdali were the chief gainers by this victory, for they acquired plunder to a large amount; but, beyond capturing seven iron guns, the result of the expedition to us was about *nil*.

That such was the net gain was proved by the fact that, within two months of the return of the column, the Foudheli,

burning with indignation at the humiliation they had suffered, and greatly impoverished by their losses, returned to their predatory habits. Collecting a small force together, their Sultan attacked the caravans proceeding through the country of their hated rivals, the Abdali, with supplies for the garrison. Another expedition was accordingly started to punish the plundering chief and his gang of thieves.

The force, consisting of 300 European infantry, and two guns with a few artillerymen, the whole under the command of Colonel Woolcombe, R.A., embarked on board Her Majesty's ships Lyra and Victoria, on the 14th of March, and proceeded to attack Shugra, their capital, which is situated on the coast about sixty miles east of Aden.

On their arrival before the seaport, at eleven a.m. of the following day, the troops immediately prepared to disembark. Having first dined on board, they accomplished this with some difficulty in the ships' boats and a large pilot-boat taken from Aden for the purpose. The weather was rough, and the men were obliged to wade through a high surf, and after having a good deal of ammunition destroyed, had to bivouac all night in their wet clothes. The pilot-boat came to signal grief; she grounded a long way from the shore, and soon filled from the waves washing over her. The soldiers and her crew got thoroughly drenched, and had to reach the shore, more than 100 yards distant, the best way they could;

and, indeed, had it not been for the sailors of the Lyra, who worked most energetically, the pilot-boat must have been lost.

The landing was at first opposed by some thirty or forty of the Foudheli, who kept up a smart fire on the boats as they neared the land; but a few round shot from the Armstrong in the bow of the Lyra's pinnace astonished the natives, and so they retired to a tope of date trees, and finally, on our men effecting a footing, fled to the hills.

One fool-hardy fellow, indeed, had actually the temerity to wade thirty or forty yards into the surf, for the purpose of getting a closer shot at the invading force; but this indiscreet personage paid, or rather "was paid," for this exhibition of unavailing gallantry by the receipt, "free, gratis, and for nothing," of one ounce of lead in the region vulgarly termed the "bread-basket," and more politely designated, the "abdomen." The Enfield bullet settled out of hand the business of this rash patriot, and it subsequently came to the ears of the Feringhees that he was interred with all the honours by his sorrowing comrades and fellow-robbers in the before-mentioned tope, where, let us hope, "after life's fitful fever he sleeps well"; "*Requiescat in pace*," and all the rest of it.

A fishing village close by was quite deserted, but there were stored in it large quantities of grain, coffee, and dates; and it is scarcely necessary to add that the general camp,

"pioneers and all," made pretty free with the latter articles of food. The town of Shugra was found to be quite deserted, the Sultan having fled to the hills some days previously. His palace and all the mud buildings were destroyed; and then the force set out on its return to the beach.

The sea was found to be so rough, that Colonel Woolcombe was unable to embark the bullocks he had taken to draw the guns, and they had to be left behind. The embarkation was effected in safety, and the expeditionary column returned to Aden, where they arrived on the 17th March, without any casualties.

A few words regarding the present of this interesting place.

As soon as the peninsula was captured, the Engineer officers of the Bombay army set about constructing those fortifications which have rendered the position almost impregnable. Some military works are, I believe, still in progress, the workmen employed being Arabs. On every point, wherever you turn, you are confronted with guns, which sweep every road and path leading to the town; and one is filled with the conviction that the place is unassailable, and could be held by a handful of British troops, assisted by some gunboats, against any foe.

There are three sets of barracks: one at Steamer Point, which is decidedly the most healthy, and which are occupied

by the Artillerymen who man the batteries for the defence of the harbour; another at the town of Aden proper, where the bulk of the troops are stationed; and a third set at the Isthmus, for the European detachments on duty there. The troops ordinarily garrisoning this stronghold consist of one battalion of a British regiment, two batteries of Royal Artillery, one battery of Native Artillery, called Golundauze; one company of Native Sappers, and one regiment of Bombay Native Infantry.

A troop of irregular cavalry, the well-known Poonah horse, has been, within recent years, employed in keeping open the roads on the main land in the neighbourhood of Aden. They must assuredly be of great service.

As regards the future of Aden, not only for military purposes is it a valuable addition to the gems that adorn the British Crown, but the stronghold may also be useful for more peaceful conquests; notably as a *point d'appui* for pushing still further the triumphs of geographical discovery. The vast hidden treasures of Africa, as also its races, are still as a sealed book to us Occidentals. Captain Burton, the fellow-traveller of the late lamented Speke, and his sharer in many a danger, was of opinion (he has not spoken since Sir Samuel Baker published the narrative of his discovery of the Albert Nyanza) that the true sources of the Nile are as far from being discovered as ever. He says that the mystery that enshrouds this "*Arcanum magnum*" of

old-world geography is as impenetrable as in the days of Ptolemy, and that the lines—

> "Arcanum natura caput non prodidit ulli;
> Nec licuit populis parvum te, Nile, vivere,"

are as applicable to the state of geographical science on this question at the present day as they were three thousand years ago.

Whether it is so, and we should seek for the parent waters of the Nile in the vast lake known as Tanganyika, or other reservoirs still further to the south, or whether we have solved the problem, Father Time, or perhaps, Dr. Livingstone, when he returns from his adventurous wanderings in Central Africa, will show.

II.

Perim: and a Cruise to the African Mainland.

PERIM is, after Aden, the next link in the chain that, we may say, almost without exaggeration, binds half the world in subjection to Britain.

It appears to me as not a little singular that the farther one travels from the centre of our strength, which is naturally the United Kingdom, so not only our military power, but our prestige, gains in strength. This is doubtless owing to our naval, or rather to our nautical pre-eminence.

How much loftier, as it seems to me, is our position in Asia than in Europe! In the former continent we hold in the hollow of our hand the vast country of India, its plains teeming with an almost countless population, composed of multifarious races, speaking divers tongues—yet we have bowed the haughty head of the Seikh, and the Rajpoot, and the Mahratta, solely by the matchless prowess of the British soldier.

Again, we are pre-eminently the first of the great powers in Africa, also in China, Japan, the Persian Gulf, and the Red Sea; in all these waters our fleets ride paramount, and no potentate gainsays our position as the chiefest Eastern power, or dares move a finger without first consulting us, or gaining our alliance in the event of hostilities.

Far otherwise is it now in Europe. The time was when British diplomacy and British arms counted for something in all European questions. We need not go farther back than the earlier years of the reign of her present Most Gracious Majesty. In 1840, if the muse of history speaks true, there was a certain noble Viscount, Lord Palmerston by name, who sent some notable despatches to one M. Guizot, foreign minister to a power not a thousand miles from these shores, and there was also an eccentric personage yclept, I believe—he was before my time—"Fighting Charlie," who, on the 3rd November in the same memorable year of grace, knocked the walls of a place that went by the name of Acre, about the ears of an Egyptian general, Ibrahim Pacha, to wit, and that, notwithstanding the fact that a first-rate power, known as France, strongly objected —"protested" is the diplomatic language—to the entire proceeding. As the French say, "let us return to our muttons," from which we have digressed most unaccountably.

The island of Perim lies in 12° 38′ N. lat., and 43° 21′

E. long., and is situated, as all the world knows, at the mouth of the Straits of Babelmandeb, or the "Cape of the Great Affliction," exactly ninety-six miles from Aden. Of these Straits, Moore writes :—

> "But lone, unheeded, from the bay
> The vessel takes its mournful way,
> Like some ill-destined bark that steers
> In silence through the Gate of Tears."

Richardson says the Straits of Babelmandeb received this name of Gate of Tears, from the old Arabians, on account of the danger of the navigation and the number of shipwrecks by which it was distinguished; which induced them to consider as dead, and to wear mourning for all who had the boldness to hazard the passage through it into the Indian Ocean.

The Cape on the Arabian shore, called Ras Babelmandeb, forms the south-western extremity of that country, and the north-eastern shore of the entrance into the Red Sea. From the deck of a vessel it presents the appearance of the "quoin" of a gun, and is visible on a clear day a distance of thirty-five miles. The highest peak, which is called Jebel Manhali, rises to a height of 865 feet, and sloping down to the sea, terminates in the Cape.

Perim, known to the Arabs of our day as Meyoon, is a bare rocky island, about four and a half miles long by two broad, and its highest point is not more than 245 feet

above the level of the sea. Perim being situated in the Straits, divides them into two channels, which may be called the North and South Channels. The North, or smaller of the two Straits, is between the island and Ras Babel-mandeb; it is about 3,000 yards broad at the narrowest point, increasing in breadth at both the east and west entrances. There is no danger in the navigation of this Strait, though a spit of broken ground runs out a short distance from the north side of Perim, and another to the north-west of it, from Pilot Rock, a small island situated about half a mile from the Arabian coast; the latter reef obliges vessels standing through the Straits to hug the Perim shore, thereby bringing them within the range of any guns on the island.

The discolouration of the water distinctly points out the position of both these shoals; the soundings, which are from eight and twelve to sixteen fathoms, are bold and irregular in the centre and over on the Perim side, but on the north side they are regular with a sandy bottom. The tides are very irregular. Sometimes little ebb tide is experienced in the centre of the channel, while at other times, particularly at night on the full and change of the moon, the tide runs at the rate of four knots an hour, making a strong ripple when opposed to the wind.

The South or great Strait is formed by Jebel Sijan on the African coast, and the west point of Perim, and is four-

teen and a half geographical miles in breadth. On the Perim side of the channel, a bank of soundings projects to the distance of three miles off the island, having forty to sixty fathoms on its outer edge, and gradually shoaling to twenty fathoms near the island. The greatest depth in the Straits is 185 fathoms. On the African shore there is a rocky reef extending about half a mile from the beach.

Captain Haines, to whose paper, communicated to the Geographical Society in 1839, I am indebted for some of these particulars, divides the Straits of Babelmandeb into three distinct passages. Strictly speaking, it is so for about three and a half miles from Jebel Sijan. On the African coast there is a group of islets, called the Brothers, or by the Arabs, Jezirat-es-sabah, or the Seven Islands. Horsburgh speaks of eight islands, and Captain Haines describes them as being six in number, but I am not aware whether any one has, during recent years, had the curiosity to count them, for though I have cruised about these Straits many times, I cannot recollect ever to have attempted the solution of these contradictory statements.

The High Brother, as the loftiest of these islets is called, forms a conspicuous peak, rising about 350 feet above the sea, and has a small bay on its northern side, in which are to be found abundance of turtle and fish of various kinds. The Brothers are of a brownish hue, and the most western is of volcanic formation; they are discernible from a con-

siderable distance. The currents are conflicting and uncertain in the large Strait, and Captain Haines speaks of a fast sailing man-of-war, which, after attempting ineffectually for ten days to beat through this channel, was obliged to bear up, and this, though there was a strong breeze blowing at the time, in battling against which she sprung some of her spars. I confess I have not encountered so great opposition from the current, when working through the large Strait in a sailing ship; but Captain Haines' great practical experience in these seas is not at fault in inducing him to prefer the narrow Strait to beat through.

The island of Perim can be seen from the deck a distance of from fifteen to twenty miles. On rising above the horizon it presents the appearance of a low island gradually sloping from the centre to its extremes. The formation is purely volcanic, and consists of long, low and gradually sloping ranges of hills, surrounding an excellent harbour on the south-western side about a mile and a half in length, half a mile in breadth, and with a depth varying from four to six fathoms in the best anchorages.

The hills have formerly been intersected with bays and indentures, which in the course of time have been filled up with coral and sand, and are now low plains scantily covered with salsola, sea lavender, wild mignonette, and other plants which flourish in a salt sandy soil. These plains occupy about one-fourth of the island, and occur principally on the

north side. The rocks, which are all igneous, are nowhere exposed, save where they dip perpendicularly into the sea; they are covered with a layer of volcanic mud, of from two to six feet in depth, above which is another layer of loose boulders, or masses of black vesicular lava, in some places so thickly set as to resemble a rude pavement.

All endeavours to procure water upon the island of Perim, notwithstanding that wells have been sunk to considerable depths, have failed, but a scanty supply is procurable from the adjacent coasts.

Water tanks have been constructed under the superintendence of Lieutenant (now Captain) Greig, of the Royal Bombay Engineers, who was the able Engineer officer in charge of the island when the writer was stationed there. Water for the use of the garrison is supplied from Aden, from which port a native vessel used in my day to run every week with supplies and letters for the garrison.

We will now submit some interesting particulars regarding the history of the island, which have been gathered from various sources, chiefly from a paper published in the year 1858, by the Rev. George Percy Badger, a chaplain in the Bombay service, well known in India for his linguistic acquirements, and who was Persian interpreter on the staff of Sir James Outram, during the Persian War in 1857, and officiated for some time as chaplain at Aden.

Perim is styled in the "Periplus Maris Erythræi" the

island of Diodorus. During the reign of the Ptolemies, and subsequently under the Romans, no use appears to have been made of its harbour, the navigators of that period preferring a small bay called Okelis, or by the Arabs Et Toorba, situated on the Arabian side, a few miles before entering the Straits from the south.

This port of Okelis, with Yemen generally, was acquired by the Romans, but Perim was doubtless considered too unimportant to be worth holding. In the 16th century, under the rule of Sultan Soleiman the First, surnamed the Magnificent, Aden was seized by the Turks, who also took possession of all the maritime towns of Arabia; but in no accounts do we find any mention of the subject of these memoranda. Albuquerque is said to have landed upon it in 1513, on his return from the Red Sea, and having erected a high cross on an eminence, after the custom of pious Portuguese commanders, called the island Santa Cruz.

About the year 1570, the nominal sovereignty of Perim passed away from the Turks, for the whole of Yemen revolted from the rule of Sultan Selim the Second, and declared its independence, electing as their ruler an Imaum, who selected Sanaa, near the Straits of Babelmandeb, as his capital.

Perim was temporarily occupied by a race of pirates who infested the Straits of Babelmandeb, and who amassed considerable booty by plundering the native vessels engaged in the Indian trade. Indeed, they formed a project for

settling here and erecting strong fortifications; but, having with much labour dug through the solid rock to a depth of fifteen fathoms in a fruitless search for water, they abandoned their design, and removed to Mary's Island, on the east coast of Madagascar. In 1738, after the French bombarded Mocha on account of some outrages which had been perpetrated by the Dowla or Imaum's Viceroy on a French merchant vessel at that port, they landed on the island. Our neighbours on the other side of the Channel will not disown how they obtained satisfaction on that occasion; and if so, they must allow who were the offending authorities,—certainly not the Turks.

In 1798 a British force, under Colonel Murray, was despatched from Bombay, and, on the urgent solicitations of the Ottoman Government directed to the Sultan of Sanaa, who was then sovereign of the Peninsula of Aden, it was allowed to remain at that stronghold for a short time, the better to secure the object of the expedition, viz., to co-operate with Sir David Baird's movement against the French in Egypt. In the following year the English Government despatched a naval force from Great Britain, under the command of Admiral Blanket, to cruise in the Red Sea; at the same time orders were sent to Bombay, directing the government of that Presidency to secure and fortify the island of Perim, so as to prevent all communication, on the part of the French then in Egypt, with India by way of the Red Sea.

Accordingly, in the month of April, a small squadron with a detachment of 300 men, under the command of Colonel Murray, who had been appointed British Commissioner for the Red Sea, proceeded to execute this service, and, on the 3rd of May, the island of Perim, not being claimed by, and not being considered as justly pertaining to, any Government, was formally taken possession of on behalf of the East India Company.

It is to be noted that no opposition of any sort was on this occasion made to our occupation of Perim, and during the short time the garrison remained there they were regularly supplied with provisions from Mocha, the Imaum's chief maritime town.

From that period till the 1st September following, the troops continued in possession of Perim; but finding after every practicable exertion had been used that the island yielded not a drop of fresh water, and that the Straits could not be commanded by batteries on the shore, Colonel Murray determined to withdraw his detachment, for which he had a strong inducement from the Sultan of Aden, who offered to receive them as long as they might choose to remain in his dominions. Accordingly the troops returned to Aden, where they remained till the following March, having during their long stay been accommodated in a manner exceeding their expectation, and with a cordiality never before experienced in this inhospitable part of Arabia.

It is important to observe that no permission was either asked or obtained for this our first occupation of Perim; in fact, there was no one of whom such a privilege could be requested, or who could with any propriety grant it. The island had never been occupied either by the Turks or by the Imaum of Sanaa, and the traces of attempts that appear to have been made to bore wells are known to be the work of the pirates of whom I have spoken. Finally, Perim had been occupied by us, in the first instance, in accordance with the well-recognized maxim of international law, that an uninhabited island, not belonging to, or claimed by, any power, may be taken possession of by any recognized Government.

Early in the present century the Turks were dispossessed, by a successful insurrection, of nearly all the territory they had held in the Hedjaz; and it was not till about the year 1811 that Mohammed Pasha of Egypt, having broken the power of the fanatical sect of the Wahabees, who had overrun Arabia to the shores of the Persian Gulf, restored the sovereignty of the Turks over that district. At the same period the authority of the Turks was re-established over the maritime towns of Yemen, as far south as Mocha, and they have continued in undisputed possession ever since; but Mohammed Pasha was informed by the British Government of that day, that they would view with displeasure any attempt on his part to extend his conquests any further south. Every dispassionate person must, from these facts, arrive at

the conclusion that we were justified in continuing to regard Perim in the Straits of Babelmandeb as British territory.

From the year 1799 until the beginning of 1857, the island never occupied the attention of the Indian Government, or of the public. In consequence, however, of the increasing steam navigation of the Red Sea, the attention of the Bombay authorities had frequently been directed by merchants and shipmasters to the desirability of erecting a lighthouse on the island, so as to render safer the passage of the Straits; for, owing to the slight elevation of its shores, ships oftentimes could not distinguish it at night, and the currents to which I have referred were an additiona source of inconvenience. To obviate these dangers the Home Government issued orders for the re-occupation of Perim, and for the construction of a lighthouse on the most commanding point, so that vessels should be able to pass the Straits at any hour of the day or night. As a military position, it was considered that the island could never be of any real importance, chiefly from the want of water. Again, should it be fortified, its guns could only command the Northern Channel; for, from the great breadth of the strait on the African side of the island, a fleet could, by hugging that shore, avoid the fire of ordnance of the heaviest calibre. What "the gun of the future" may do in this way, he would be a bold man who would attempt to predict; but "it's a far cry to Loch Awe," and eleven miles is a

great range even for a 100-ton gun, should any such be constructed.

In the ever-memorable year of grace 1857, the Indian Government resolved to occupy Perim. The only wonder now is that a place of such strategical value had not been occupied permanently long before. Accordingly, orders were sent by the Bombay Government to the Political Resident at Aden to send a couple of men-of-war with a few troops to take possession of the island in the name of Her Most Gracious Majesty. On the receipt of instructions, the Political Resident despatched a sailing corvette of eighteen guns and another small vessel of war. The troops embarked on these ships consisted of a company of Native Artillerymen, or Golundauze, as they are called, with their complement of officers, and some Sappers, with two Engineer officers. The Assistant Political Resident was sent to represent the Queen, and a bran-new "union-jack" having been drawn out of store to do honour to the occasion, the small expedition sailed for its destination. Perim is only some ninety-six miles from Aden, and we arrived there on the following day. Preparations were at once made to take possession. The Politico, with the senior naval officer and a party of naval and military officers, landed the succeeding morning, and the ceremony of formally taking possession was duly performed. This merely consisted of hoisting the British union-jack on the highest

point of land, under a salute of twenty-one guns from the ships-of-war, while the troops presented arms to the symbol of the majesty of England as it fluttered, for the first time, up to the mast-head of the spar planted in this the newest appanage of our mighty empire. Three cheers were then called for, and lustily given, for Queen Victoria, the first, doubtless, ever heard on this desert island. The din of the British hurrahs roused the echoes of the silent shores, causing the wild sea-birds to rise in clouds over the place, and wheel overhead in concentric circles, filling the air with their plaintive wailing notes as though interrogating each other as to what could be meant by such an unusual uproar, and then some of the more wary, as seemingly mistrusting our presence, sailed away for more remote habitations not yet trod by the foot of man.

The ceremony concluded, the whole party returned on board the corvette, and the day was brought to a close by the good old conventional custom of the officers dining together, while the comfort and jollity of the men-of-war's men and soldiers were not overlooked; for the captain ordered an extra glass of grog to be served out to all hands. Thus Perim became part and parcel of British soil, another satellite in that firmament of territories, inhabited by countless races, which revolves round the "tight little island," a sun which reverses the order of the celestial sphere; for, though itself of the smallest dimensions, yet it attracts and

keeps in their orbits (that is, in subjection to its imperial will) the boundless tracts of earth, almost as vast as entire continents, which are colonized and held by the invincible Anglo-Saxon people. Verily the mightiest empires of "hoar antiquity" sink into insignificance when measured by the territorial possessions of the good Queen who sits enthroned in the Pearl of the West—possessions which might even have gratified the limitless ambition of an Alexander.

There was a cry of indignation raised on the continent of Europe against what the Great Powers called our aggressive policy; and, according to the Independence Belge the Austrian Ambassador at Constantinople proposed to the Ministers of the other Powers to send a collective note to the British Government, protesting against the occupation of Perim. Whether this was ever done, the secrets of diplomacy have never divulged; but it is a fact that the Sublime Porte addressed a protest to the English Government, which was very properly disregarded.

Since our occupation, tanks have been constructed, and reservoirs for the storing of rain-water hewn out, while a serviceable lighthouse has been erected. The writer was attached to one of the East India Company's cruisers that kept up communication between Aden and Perim, and for some time was stationed at the island. The garrison consisted at that time of some Sappers, and one company of Golundauze, or Native Artillerymen. My companions were one Engineer

and two Artillery officers; and, in spite of the unpropitious surroundings of the place, we managed, with an adaptation to circumstances not unworthy of Mark Tapley himself, to be resigned—nay, to be jolly. I must make a reservation on this head, for a due regard to truth constrains me to add the qualifying admission, "as long as the bottled ale lasted." When that beverage, so absolutely essential to sustain the jollity of the Briton expatriated to a desert island, or, to put it in every-day parlance, when the beer "gave out," our laughter waned, and our resolution to make the best of it waxed faint in a strictly mathematical ratio. But then, as we watched the horizon, like that young lady in the child's story who kept a sharp look-out for "sister Ann," and the welcome sail of the Arab buglah hove in sight, the thrice-blessed craft that brought stores, and notably certain boxes filled with straw from the godown of Cursetjee, that most amiable Parsee merchant, then our souls were rejoiced within us, and the barometer of our spirits rose, as does the mercury in the tube under the influence of favouring skies.

Barracks were constructed on the most appropriate site; the enclosure was walled in and loop-holed, and rendered sufficiently strong to resist an attack of Arabs, though, of course, it was powerless against artillery. Iron tanks filled with sufficient water for immediate use were kept stored within the fort. A small yacht of about fifteen tons burden, and manned with an officer and four seamen, detached from

one of the Company's ships of war at Aden, was stationed in the capacious harbour to act as guard-ship. The short cruises we used to take in her over to the African or Arabian coast pleasantly varied the monotony of Perim life.

While in port, the commandant would amuse himself by signalling to the senior naval officer to "come and dine," while the latter, having secured, perhaps, a haul of some particularly fine fish, would reciprocate his hospitality by an invitation to go on board, and have "pot-luck." Not that there was no employment for the garrison; there was plenty to do in the way of constructing tanks and reservoirs for the storing of rain-water, and carrying out other works. The only living creatures to be found in this inhospitable island are sea-birds, which lay their eggs all over the ground in such profusion that, as you walk, you constantly find yourself stamping on eggs, or involuntarily making a football of some half-fledged young gull.

Turtle also abound at Perim. We used to form parties to go on shore at night to turn these singular creatures, and this sport afforded great amusement to the sailors. Few animals are more ungainly out of the water than the turtle, though it is surprising the rate at which they scuttle off to their native element when chased, kicking up the sand in the most ludicrous manner.

We used to revel in turtle until we were heartily sick of the dainty luxury. In fact, all hands ate turtle soup, and

turtle hashed and stewed, and cooked in every imaginable form, until, like aldermen, our souls revolted at the delicacy, and we returned to plain salt junk and "hard tack," as the "weevilly" biscuits supplied to the navy are called. "Calipash" and "calipee" both were a drug in the Perim market, and we would have willingly contracted to supply the London civic feasts with a hundred tureensful for solid "roast and boiled."

Before concluding this paper I might mention a fact that may perhaps be classed among "the things not generally known." I refer to the circumstance that there is another dependency of the British Crown, less than a day's steam from Aden or Perim. This appanage of Britain consists of a group of islands in the Gulf of Tajourrah, called the Muskakh Islands. On the 31st of August, 1840, Lieutenant Barker, of the Indian Navy, proceeded from Aden to take possession of them, in the name of Her Most Gracious Majesty, they having been previously sold to the British Government by the Sultan of Tajourrah. The principal island is called Mosha or Mushah, and is situated in 11° 41′ N. lat., and 43° 13′ E. long.

Its highest elevation is about thirty feet above the level of the sea. Good anchorage is to be found on one side, and a few trees are scattered over its surface; but there is not a drop of water to be found.

One ship of war used occasionally to call at Perim, and,

as I have said, a native vessel ran from Aden with the mails and for the purpose of keeping up the necessary supplies of provisions and water. The corvette, while employed between these ports, used to take short cruises along the opposite shores of Africa as far to the eastward as Cape Guardafui.

On one of these occasions a curious incident occurred, the narration of which may interest my readers. After lying at Perim a fortnight, the captain determined to stand over to the African coast for the purpose of exercising his men at general quarters under sail, and also to drive away the fever which had made its appearance on board, and for which there is no remedy so good as a good blow and such hard work as "reefing topsails" and exercising at general quarters. The Company's ship Lachesis, accordingly, one morning "hove up" her anchor, and setting all plain sail stood out of the harbour in a southerly direction. "Studding-sails" were set, and the old ship was soon tearing along at the rate of ten knots an hour. On arriving at our cruising ground we bore up for Zeyla, a large town for that part of the world, and which is situated on a rather dangerous coast. Reefs and sunken rocks are plentiful, and there lay before our eyes in the roadstead of the place, as a warning "to those whom it might concern," the wreck of a fine large French frigate, her black paddle-boxes still protruding above the water like two huge cavalry drums.

The Cayman had run ashore on a sunken rock, the position of which was not laid down on the chart, and her captain, despairing of getting her off, made his way with his crew to Aden in some native craft, and left her bones to rot in that stormy bay.

We purchased some live stock from the sheikh of the place, and then, the weather looking threatening, made sail so as to get a good offing. The sheep you buy here are remarkable for curiously shaped thick tails, which weigh sometimes about eight or ten pounds; they consist of nothing but fat, and of course are not fit for food. The sailors on board rendered them into grease for the ship's use.

A few nights after our departure, towards eight o'clock in the evening, the Lachesis was standing in towards the land a little to the northward of Zeyla, but which the captain did not expect, by the dead reckoning, to make before ten on the following morning, when the incident of which I have spoken occurred. It so happened that the second lieutenant, who kept the middle-watch, was on the sick list, and a junior mate took his duty. It blew very hard all night, and before eight bells (twelve o'clock) the mainsail was hauled up, and the ship put under the three topsails with the second reef taken in, the fore-course, and the fore-topmast staysail. The wind was on the starboard quarter, and the old corvette was "walking her chalks" at

a great rate, sending the spray occasionally in blinding showers right over the quarter-deck as she took her headers. Still, as we were eighty miles from land, according to our calculations, no danger was apprehended; and when the third lieutenant, after bringing the ship "to a taut bowline" on the starboard tack—that is, "hauling the wind,"—gave over the charge of the deck at twelve to the young mate aforesaid, the instructions, according to the "night order book," were to the effect that the corvette was to be kept on her course all night, and sail was not to be "shortened unless the wind freshened so greatly as to necessitate a change." The commanding-officer was desirous of taking every advantage of such a favourable wind, as we wished to put in an appearance at another Soomaulie town on the coast, just to show that the policeman "on the beat" was still alive; for our duties with the troublesome Arabs and Africans in that corner of the Indian Ocean were of an exactly similar nature to those which devolve on "Policeman X 45" of the Metropolitan Force, when that admirable officer looks into some "thieves' kitchen" in St. Giles just to see that "the Velvet Lad" is on hand, or to tap "Carrotty Ned" on the shoulder, and intimate to that villanous but crafty cracksman that he is wanted. We were going to look in on the sheikh, who, it was rumoured, was holding as prisoners (and prisoners of war in that part of the world are generally consigned to execution) some natives

belonging to a friendly tribe; to carry out the simile, our warrant for enforcing the law against this disturber of the peace was always visible, and could be inspected by the curious as it fluttered at the mizen-peak of the man-o'-war; and as to our means for exacting reparation, why an anxious inquirer after information was referred to the black polished row of cannon which, with old-maidish regularity were ranged along the decks, and in their prim silence looked harmless enough. They could speak, though, when the time came for conversation, and the voices from their iron mouths could be heard a long, long distance as they reverberated along the desert shores; and, strange to say, too, though they could not be said to "discourse sweet music," yet their tones possessed a magical attraction for the untutored "children of the desert," which the voice of the charmer (in the shape of the diplomatist) did not possess, "charm he never so wisely."

The captain afterwards told me, on talking over the events of that night, that when he retired punctually at nine o'clock, as was his wont, to his swing-cot, he could not, for some unaccountable reason, calm his thoughts so as to induce sleep. It was not that he did not feel sleepy, it was not that he was suffering from any ailment. No; on the contrary, he felt more than ordinarily fatigued, and was perfectly well. He turned and twisted in his bed—now this side, now that; every now and again he dozed off, but it

was only to wake up suddenly either with some horrid dream, or with some nervous feeling which his waking thoughts told him were groundless and weak inventions of the fancy. At length he jumped up with a start, and giving expression to some ejaculations, by no means dictated by a feeling of resignation, hastily dressed himself in his uniform, and leaving his cabin, ascended to the upper deck. Here he found it was blowing hard, but not hard enough, he thought, to take in sail as yet. He paced up and down the deck with his usual quick, energetic step, when, walking up to the lee-rail, he looked out into the night. Just then the ship took a tremendous header into the trough of the sea, and then, as the huge wave glided like a serpent from under the corvette, she rolled over on her broadside, while her bows broached to a little, giving a view of the stormy sea right ahead. It was only for a passing instant that the eye of the veteran sailor glanced over this arc of the horizon, but directly he did so something attracted his attention; for running off the poop like an escaped lunatic—the mate at the time, indeed, seriously thought his commanding-officer had gone mad—he rushed to the forepart of the deck, and clearing the forecastle ladder with two steps, like another Grimaldi, the gallant officer was standing on the small elevated deck which, as in the days of the *Henri Grâce de Dieu*, still goes by the antiquated name of topgallant forecastle, and with his white hair fluttering in the gale, stared

out to windward as if the Phantom Ship was bearing down upon his command.

The captain did not see the Phantom Ship, or indeed any ship at all, but he saw something that was far more terrible to the mind of that "Ancient Mariner," more to be dreaded than the terrors of the battle or the breeze. Within a few hundred yards of the bow of his ship he saw the water thrown high into the air as it churned and raged upon a reef. Those white cascades indicated that the most fearful of the many dangers of the sea was almost within a stone's throw, and that death by shipwreck was awfully imminent. He was a man made for action, and God knows that on this occasion only the exertion of the most prompt courage and seamanlike skill saved the lives of two hundred men, and averted the destruction of one of the Company's finest corvettes. Captain Bulwark roared out in a voice of thunder, "Turn the hands out, clear the lower deck," and rushing to the great bell of the ship which swung at the break of the forecastle, he rang out an alarm which was answered almost like magic. As the iron clang of the fire-bell sounded loud and crisp in the cold morning air, in spite of the rising gale, its fearful tones were borne down to the lower deck, where slumbered the watch off duty. Such a peal was only to be tolled when fire had broken out on board the Lachesis, and now, when all hands were awakened by the clamour, they tumbled up on deck just as they were,

and every man went to his station, guided by the instinct of true discipline. Of course the officers were not the last to appear, and long before the master-at-arms ceased to shout "Clear the lower deck, tumble up, lads," every soul not absolutely rendered helpless by sickness was at his post. "Down helm, 'bout ship!" shouted the captain. Well he knew the men he commanded, and hence he had the helm put "hard-a-port" before giving the order, which is in the character of defining the evolution to be performed, and is always the first in order to be piped by the boatswain. The jib-sheets he let fly himself, while, at his orders, the foresail was hauled up, and the gallant old corvette, feeling the master-hand, obeyed the helm and flew up into the wind, while every sail flapped fiercely, and the tall masts shivered and bent in every joint as the strain was taken off the backstays and thrown suddenly on the rigging. It was the supreme moment. Ah, well was it for us she answered her helm at this critical juncture, for had she fallen off again she must have been swallowed up by the black and jagged reef which, like the sea monster threatening the bound and shrinking form of Andromeda, yawned to devour the devoted ship. As the ponderous mainyard, with all the upper spars and the intricate web of gear, was swung round, creaking and groaning heavily at the tension, and leaving the head sails all flat aback, the cause of all this strange midnight manœuvring was disclosed to the gaze of the

astonished tars. Many a brave, reckless seaman grew pale and shuddered as he recognized the imminence of the peril, and every one felt grateful to the commander for his marvellous presence of mind and prompt appreciation of the danger threatening us. The corvette was saved, but as she filled again on the other tack, and before she gathered her way, you could, had you been so minded, have thrown a biscuit on the terrible crags near her counter. How the hissing, foaming water was lashed into tall columns of spray as the sea flung itself with mighty force on the adamantine obstructions against which for ages it had lavished in vain all its power and fury! It had been robbed, too, of its prey just at the very moment when the whirlpools (which eddied and dimpled round the Lachesis like the smile of some treacherous syren luring to his destruction the fascinated mariner) were drawing that prey within their baleful influence. The mistake in the captain's calculation as to the ship's distance from the land was accounted for by the currents which set in along this coast, sometimes on to the land and sometimes seawards.

On our return to Perim we found the fortifications approaching completion, and the construction of the barracks for the detachment of troops sufficiently far advanced to allow of our enjoying our Christmas-day festivities on shore.

What a house-warming it was, to be sure! We made the

new rafters ring again with our songs; and for the first time, I opine, in the desert island of Perim, the sandy shores echoed to the old naval toast of "Sweethearts and Wives."

What must the comical-visaged turtles have thought, as, crawling up the beach, they halted one moment to listen to the unaccustomed sounds of jollity and mirth? The "oldest inhabitant" no doubt shook his venerable bald head, and declared no good could come of *our* occupation of Perim.

III.

Soomauli Land: and a Perilous Mission to Berberah.

THE country of the Soomaulies extends from Ras-el-Khyle, on the eastern coast of Africa, a little to the southward of Ras Assair, or Cape Guardafui, to the neighbourhood of Zeylah, forming one side of what is called the Gulf of Aden. Berberah, after Harar, which is some distance in the interior, is the chief town on this coast, and is situated in latitude 10° 28′ north, longitude 45° 7′ east. It has in all probability existed as a place of trade for several centuries, though there are few remains to attest its antiquity; the only one of importance being an aqueduct of stone and chunam, about nine miles in length.

There are two great races of Soomaulies; one inhabits the country from Cape Guardafui to Burnt Island; and the other the tract of land between this island and Zeylah; and these are constantly warring with each other. The Soomaulies to the westward of Burnt Island are those we have

now to deal with, as Berberah is situated in their country. They consider themselves a race of Arabs, and by a tradition extant among them, profess to derive their origin from Sheikh Isackh, an Arab chief and saint, who settled on this coast, and, marrying a female of the place, became the ancestor of those tribes who flourish there to the present day.

The town of Berberah is situated at the extremity of a fine natural harbour, formed by a bend in the coast line and a low sandy spit nearly two miles in length, and projecting out almost at right angles with the general line of coast. The great drawback to Berberah is the scarcity of good water; that in the wells being so brackish, that the wealthier portion of the merchants are compelled to send some eighteen miles to the eastward for a supply.

To the westward of Berberah there are no trading ports until you come to Zeylah, the seaport town of Harar, which, owing to the shoal water, has no very considerable trade with places beyond sea. In fact, the whole coast about Zeylah is begirt with shoals and sunken rocks; and I remember seeing, in 1858, the gaunt wreck of the French man-of-war steamer Cayman, which pointed out to all whom it might concern, the dangers of that inhospitable shore. The town itself is built on a low sandy cape, called Ras Mahmahr, and is surrounded by a wall in a very dilapidated state. Zeylah now consists of only a few stone buildings and some 250

huts. Captain Cruttendon of the Indian Navy, perhaps the best living authority, who visited this country in 1848, when employed at the wreck of the Honourable Company's steam frigate Memnon, at Ras Assair, does not assign an earlier date to its settlement than A.D. 1500, or shortly after the occupation of Yemen by the Turks.

Berberah has existed for several centuries as a port, carrying on a great trade with Bahrein, Bussorah, and Grane in the Persian Gulf, as well as Muscat; though in latter times the Banians of Bombay, Porebunder, and Mandavie, ever to the fore when rupees are to be made, have distanced all competitors, and do the largest trade with these half-savage tribes; yet the exports of Soomauli Land still find their way to the Gulf and elsewhere.

From the months of April to October Berberah is entirely deserted, nothing remaining to mark the site of the great town but the bones of slaughtered camels and sheep, and the framework of a few huts piled on the beach in readiness for the ensuing year. As soon as the annual fair-time commences, the town rises like a phœnix from its ashes; temporary huts are constructed in hundreds, and the natives flock in from distant inland stations to trade and barter with the Caffres, as they call all foreigners. At the end of March the exodus recommences, and from a place containing a population of some 20,000 people, it becomes almost a solitude, and reverts to its four-footed denizens.

It is a curious sight to see the thousands of camels encamped round the town during fair-time, and it is very interesting to watch in early morning the "cafilahs," or caravans, as they defile in a long endless procession, the tall, gaunt forms of the "ships of the desert" standing out on the low sandy ridge in picturesque distinctness against the clear, brilliant Eastern sky.

Notwithstanding that one or two of the vessels of war of the late East India Company always cruised about the coast, there was an active trade carried on in slaves between Berberah and the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf. I have been present at the capture of large slave buglahs off this port many a time, and have more than once made a descent upon the harbour itself, and pounced upon and searched Arab craft by the dozen, in spite of the scowling looks and suppressed anathemas of the captains and crews of the vessels overhauled.

Lieutenant Barker, of the Indian Navy, during his visit to this country in the year 1840, described the Soomaulies as a timid, inoffensive race, although, he added, they had the reputation among neighbouring tribes of being treacherous thieves and murderers; and I am inclined to the opinion that they have not belied this reputation on one or two occasions, of which I shall presently speak.

They are very partial to red hair, and mostly dye their heads of that colour with a sort of chunam, which when it

hardens in the sun gives the sconce a peculiar appearance. Those who have little hair wear wigs of sheepskin dyed the fashionable colour. Is it out of the bounds of possibility that the refined ladies of the western capitals of Christendom have unwittingly adopted this fashion from these semi-nude savages?

While at Berberah we used to amuse ourselves throwing anna pieces to the boys, who would swarm round the ship, and dive and pick up the coins before they reached the bottom. The children are all brought up here to take to the water like ducks, and many of them can swim before they can walk.

The Soomaulies, men and women, wear little clothing, usually a cloth round the loins. Their chief weapons are spears and shields, with short heavy clubs; they use also bows and arrows, and fire-arms have to some extent been recently introduced. In the use of the spear they are very expert, and I have seen some of the more powerful of the warriors throw them to an almost incredible distance, and with great accuracy. In appearance they are generally tall and well made, but slight and athletic. These Soomaulies are extremely quarrelsome, and are constantly engaged in wars with neighbouring tribes, and with each other. A short history of our relations with these singular people will not be considered out of place here.

The first that we learn of them is, that in the year 1826

the Bombay Government, having received intelligence that a brig from the Mauritius had been seized at Berberah, and part of her crew barbarously murdered, despatched an expedition against the tribe. On the arrival of the squadron at Berberah the ships opened fire upon the town, upon which the natives fled with their wives and families, and a party of seamen having landed took quiet possession of the place. An agreement was then entered into, by which they bound themselves to refrain from any future attack on English vessels, and also agreed to refund the full amount of the plundered property.

In March, 1854, an expedition for the purpose of exploring Soomauli Land and Harar, a place of considerable importance, was organized at Bombay by that indefatigable traveller Captain Burton; and though it terminated disastrously, an account of its proceedings will be of interest. The other members of the expedition were Lieutenant Herne, of the 1st Bombay Fusiliers, Lieutenant Stroyan, of the Indian Navy, and last, but not least, the late Captain, at that time, Lieutenant, Speke, of the 46th Bengal Native Infantry. On their arrival at Aden, Captain Burton resolved to proceed by himself on a preliminary visit to Harar, the head-quarters of the Emir. It was certain that the journey would be attended with great danger, so this brave officer resolved to adopt a disguise, with which he had before baffled the most cunning of the Arabs. Some two years before he had visited both of the

far-famed cities Mecca and Medinah, disguised as a merchant, and now again he assumed the habit and staid appearance of a pious Mohammedan and traveller, under the appellation of El Haj Abdullah.

On October 29th, 1854, the party started from Aden for Zeylah in a Soomauli boat. After a lengthy detention, during which the usual amount of lying was gone through by the Arab agents, who had been previously despatched to purchase mules, but who, like true Ishmaelites, pilfered the rupees, but produced never a mule, El Haj Abdullah started for the interior of Soomauli Land. His party consisted of some twenty armed men under a petty sheikh, whom old Shumaki, the well-known chief of the Soomaulies, a man always friendly to the English, had engaged, for a consideration in cloth and Birmingham ware, to guarantee to protect the Englishman's life. After journeying across the Plain of Zeylah, which is an arid tract diversified by low sand hills, Burton entered a country which he describes as of a more fertile character.

The Soomaulie tribe in the plain bordering the sea in the neighbourhood of Zeylah are called the Eesa, while those further inland are known by the name of Gudabursi Soomal. After crossing the first range of mountains, situated about forty miles from the sea, Burton had to pass through the Plain of Marar. Until he reached the second ridge, some twenty-five miles further to the westward, he relates in his itinerary, the cold was severe, being 42° at early dawn,

while at noon the mercury in the barometer rose to 120°. From the territory of the Gudabursi tribe they passed into the land of the Girhi, whence after a stay of six days the intrepid traveller, still disguised as an Arab merchant, proceeded to make his entry into Harar, a place in which, I believe, an European had never before set foot, and on the 3rd of January, 1855, passed beneath the portals of one of its fine gates.

The city is situate on the slope of a hill, and is about a mile in length by half a mile in breadth. Burton found the climate very salubrious. He gives the population as about 10,000 souls, of whom 2,500 are Soomaulies. The place is surrounded by walls defended with turrets, but without cannon. The adventurous traveller was introduced to the Emir, a young man of twenty-three years of age, and after a residence of some ten days he took his departure for Berberah, where his friend Speke and his companions were awaiting his return. On his arrival at this place the annual fair was in full play, and no less than 500 slaves were in the market.

The Honourable East India Company's schooner Mahi, in which I served, arrived at Berberah on the 7th April, and a salute was fired in honour of the expedition, now ready for a start into the interior. On the 9th of April heavy rain began to fall, giving notice of the approaching Gugi or Soomaulie monsoon. Upon the first shower the whole hut encampment began to break up. The tents, con-

structed of sticks, covered with skins or mats, and which though not more than some eight or ten feet square, had harboured a family of ten or twelve people, were rapidly stripped, the camels laden with the family "lares" and "penates," and the entire population were soon threading the desert wilds around the great mart.

On the 18th of April, after the departure of the Mahi, a buglah belonging to the Port of Aynterad entered the now utterly deserted harbour of Berberah, and as matters turned out, but for this Arab craft the members of the expedition must all have met their death. The buglah brought ten Soomaulies from Aden, who wished to accompany the party. Captain Burton objected to taking more than four of them, but directed that a gratuity of food should be supplied to the commander and crew of the craft.

That same evening, as the Englishmen were sitting in their tents, they were visited by spies, who even succeeded in deceiving their own countrymen. As night drew on, the two sentries were posted as customary, and the officers lay down to rest in fancied security. But treachery was at its detestable work. In the very depth of night, when a dead silence had fallen on the vast sandy plain on which they were encamped, when even the jackals ceased their melancholy cry, a band of cowardly assassins burst in upon them. Captain Burton states in his diary: "I was awoke by the cry that the enemy was upon us. My first impulse was to request

Lieutenant Herne to go out with his revolver in the direction of the attack; secondly, I called to Lieutenants Stroyan and Speke that they must arm and be ready; and thirdly, I sent my servant for my sabre. Meanwhile Lieutenant Herne returned hurriedly from the rear of the tent, exclaiming that our twelve servants, armed with swords and muskets, had run, and that the enemy amounted to about 150 men. Lieutenant Stroyan, who occupied another tent, did not appear, the other two officers and I were compelled to defend ourselves in our own with revolvers, which the darkness of the night rendered uncertain. Presently, our fire being exhausted, and the enemy pressing on with spear and javelin, the position became untenable; the tent was nearly battered down with clubs, and had we been entangled in its folds we should have been killed without the power of resistance. I gave the word for a rush, and sallied out with my sabre, closely followed by Lieutenant Herne, with Lieutenant Speke in the rear. The former was allowed to pass through the enemy with no severer injury than a few hard blows with a war club. The latter was thrown down by a stone hurled at his chest, and taken prisoner; a circumstance which we did not learn till afterwards. On leaving the tent I thought that I perceived the figure of the late Lieutenant Stroyan lying upon the ground close to the camels. I was surrounded at the time by about a dozen of the enemy, whose clubs rattled upon me without mercy, and

the strokes of my sabre were rendered uncertain by the energetic pushes of an attendant, who thus hoped to save me. The blade was raised to cut him down, he cried out in dismay, and at that moment a Soomaulie stepped forward, threw his spear so as to pierce my face, and retired before he could be punished. I then fell back for assistance, and the enemy feared pursuing us into the darkness. Many of our Soomaulies and servants were lurking about one hundred yards from the fray, but nothing could persuade them to advance. The loss of blood causing me to feel faint, I was obliged to lie down, and as dawn approached, the craft from Aynterad was seen apparently making sail out of the harbour. With my little remaining strength I reached the spit at the head of the creek, was carried into the vessel, and persuaded the crew to arm themselves and repair to the scene of our disaster. Presently Lieut. Herne appeared, and closely following him Lieutenant Speke, who had escaped from his captors, was supported in, badly wounded. Lastly, the body of Lieutenant Stroyan was brought on board, speared through the heart, with the mark of a lance piercing the abdomen, and a frightful gash apparent in the forehead. The lamented officer had ceased to exist, his body was stark and cold; we preserved his remains till the morning of the 20th instant, when we were compelled to commit them to the deep, Lieutenant Herne reading the funeral service. We were overwhelmed with grief; we had lived together

like brothers. Lieutenant Stroyan was an universal favourite, and truly melancholy was the contrast between the hour when he lay down to rest full of life and spirits, and the ensuing morning when we saw him a livid corpse."

Captain Burton, in his estimation of poor Stroyan's character, did him only but justice. He was much beloved in the service to which I also belonged, and was a good seamen as well as a distinguished surveyor, having taken a prominent part in the surveys of the coast of Western India, in Scinde, and on the Punjaub rivers.

As Burton says, there was a number of little combinations that gave rise to this disastrous ending of an important expedition. They could not take from Aden the number of well-trained Soomaulie policemen upon which they had originally calculated, and they had to depend upon raw recruits, who fled at the first charge. Burton says he had been led to believe that Berberah was as safe as Bombay, though Lieutenant Stroyan, from his intimacy, as an officer of the Indian navy, with these coasts, must surely have known better. The former officer always entertained a high opinion of these Soomaulies, and even after the narrow escape he and his comrades had from massacre, he writes that his opinion of the Soomal tribe is unchanged, and considers the deed of treachery as the performance of a band of brigands, and not the expression of a people's animus. My own belief is, that a more treacherous race of

savages does not exist on the African continent. Had the schooner Mahi been present in Berberah Creek, it is pretty certain that the expeditionary party would not have been attacked, and once in the interior, they would have been secure from the Bedouins, who entertain a horror of fire-arms. It is some satisfaction to know that these murderers did not escape punishment; four or five of them fell by the hand of the intrepid little band of officers. But a heavier retribution awaited them.

The Government despatched to the coast a squadron of two ships of war to demand satisfaction, and on this being denied, the entire coast-line was blockaded for several months; even during the season of the annual fair the people remained contumacious, but at length they were forced to yield, and agreed to give up the murderers, or pay a heavy fine. I was temporarily attached to the Honourable Company's steam frigate Semiramis, which was ordered down to Berberah to enforce compliance with the demands of our Government. The Political Resident at Aden, Colonel Coghlan, of the Bombay Artillery, went down with us, and on our arrival at Berberah, he convened a conference of native chiefs. Mr. Rassam, the same gentleman who was confined by King Theodore of Abyssinia, was present, and from his knowledge of the language was well qualified to fill the part of interpreter, which he undertook. It was a strange sight to see the almost naked barbarians squatted in

a ring on the quarter-deck of the man-of-war, sitting on their haunches, with their chins resting on their knees, and holding their spears upright before them with both hands. Although it was not at all improbable that some among that conclave had actually imbrued their hands in poor Stroyan's blood, yet such was their confidence in British honour, they fearlessly trusted themselves in our hands, confident in the sanctity of the safeguard guaranteed them. It was curious to watch them again, as they stalked round the huge 8-inch 65 cwt. guns—they had never seen any ordnance of greater calibre than the old Elphinstone's 18-pounders—while, with oriental gravity and that well-bred *nil admirari* manner that always distinguishes the "noble savage," they merely grunted forth, in guttural accents, "Wallah!" However, these dumb diplomatists, the great guns, doubtless worked their conversion to principles of justice, for, after two or three conferences, they signed a collective agreement to respect the life and property of British subjects, and were mulcted of a large sum. I believe the murderers were not surrendered, as the chiefs protested their inability to identify them, though they did at first offer to deliver to our vengeance some innocent people who had taken no part in the treacherous deed; a proposal which, of course, the Political Resident at Aden rejected.

Soon after this affair was settled, these same Soomaulies, ever restless and untrustworthy, having taken prisoners a

large number of natives belonging to a tribe who were on terms of amity with the British Government, and news having reached Aden that they purposed sacrificing all these men, the Political Resident determined on using his best endeavours to secure their release. I was at that time, though a midshipman, doing the duty of first lieutenant on board one of the Hon. East India Company's ships of war. She was the schooner already mentioned, called the Mahi, and carried a crew of fifty men. Her armament consisted of five guns, viz., one pivot 32-pounder, and four 12-pounder carronades.

The Mahi happened to be the only vessel in port, and therefore the Resident had no option but to send her on this expedition. Lieutenant Z——, the commander, was ordered on his arrival at Berberah to convene an assembly of all the chiefs, and request the release of their prisoners, and if this was refused, to forward an ultimatum to the effect that, unless his demands were complied with in the course of twenty-four hours, he should return to Aden, and a squadron of men-of-war would be despatched to shell and burn the town, and then blockade the coast for the purpose of destroying their trade. The schooner sailed on the following day for her destination, having filled up with a store of wood and water. Nothing of moment occurred during the passage. We had contrary winds and a heavy sea to contend against, and for a night the Mahi was laid to under a close-reefed fore-topsail and a balanced-reefed mainsail;

but the weather cleared off the following morning, and we made all sail on our course.

On the eighth day after our departure the low land about Berberah was sighted, and as night came on, and it was too dark to run into the creek, the ship was hove to. At day-break we made for the spit, which is a low piece of sand forming one side of the harbour, and before noon were anchored safely within shelling distance of the town. There were a great number of people encamped here, and the scene was very gay, with long strings of camels in constant motion, and the horses picketed thickly about. Some of them were being ridden and their good qualities shown off in extemporised races by the half-naked cavaliers; and others, again, under the hands of the trainers, were being broken in for sale at Aden and elsewhere. The Soomaulies are fine horsemen, and it is very picturesque to watch them, with their long loose robes flying in the wind, as they dash along at full gallop, and discharge their spears with unerring accuracy. They sit their steeds, like the Bedouins, with great grace and firmness, and rarely make use of saddles. Their horses, which are rather small, but with plenty of blood and great powers of endurance, are trained to stop dead when going at their utmost speed.

We were surprised that no boats or canoes came off to sell fish and vend the native wares, which in general they bring on board directly a ship drops anchor, for, like most

barbarians they manage to drive hard bargains with the "Feringhees," and are not deficient in cunning and knowledge of the value of articles of merchandise. They sell ostrich feathers in great quantities, but Aden is the great mart for these commodities, owing to the overland traffic. On this occasion no native merchants came off to the schooner, but the warriors of the tribe assembled in great numbers on the beach, gazing at our little ship. At noon the cutter's crew were called away by the boatswain's pipe and every man quickly joined his boat, armed with cutlass and musket and bayonet. The boat was lowered and manned alongside, and then I, as the chief executive officer, reported her ready to the captain.

The mission on which we were sent was of considerable importance, and required a good deal of political tact and courage to carry out. The captain, as the senior officer present, and consequently the representative of the British Government, was, of course, the proper person to carry on the negotiations. These, owing to the turbulence and lawlessness of the tribe with whom he was sent to treat, were of a very delicate nature, and he had received full instructions from the Political Resident, in an interview, as to the manner of conducting them. An interpreter well versed in the Soomaulie language had been sent from head-quarters on board the Mahi. When I reported the boat ready, to my surprise, instead of seeing Lieutenant Z—— in full dress,

with epaulettes and sword, I found him sitting in his cabin reading one of his numerous novels. "Mr. Low," said he to me, "you must proceed on shore in my place, and convene a meeting of the chiefs." He then proceeded to detail all the instructions he had received from Aden, which he directed me to carry out. Of course, although much astonished, I did not attempt to dictate to him. Indeed, it was useless to remonstrate with a man who could thus abdicate his position, and I therefore went on deck, proud of being intrusted with such a mission as that of seeking to save the lives of so many unfortunate captives.

He followed, and I was on the point of descending into the boat which lay ready with her crew of thirteen men, when I bethought me of asking his leave to allow the gunner's mate to accompany me in place of the coxswain. This petty officer was a fine stalwart seamen, quick and determined, and the very man one would desire at one's right hand in the hour of danger. On requesting this small favour, he said, "No, sir; you know the gunner is sick, and suppose they were to murder you all on shore there, who should I have to take charge of the magazines if I wished to open fire on the town?" This was spoken with a sardonic grin, that clearly showed the wish was father to the thought. My messmates wished me good luck as we shoved off and gave way for the head of the creek. Here were assembled in vast numbers the warriors of the tribe,

who lined the beach down to the water's edge, every man armed, as they always are, no matter what their occupation, with a spear and "creese," or long two-edged knife, and a short, thick club, with a knot at the end, made of a wood black and heavy as ebony.

My readers may wonder what there was so dangerous in this undertaking. Let me therefore explain. These people were not only quick in shedding the blood of their enemies and of each other in senseless feuds, but when their passions were aroused, or they thought any insult or attempt at intimidation was intended, nothing was more probable than that they should give vent to their anger by making victims of the instruments of their supposed humiliation. Like all savages, they held human life very cheap, and would think nothing of putting to death emissaries sent to treat with them, contrary to all the notions of international law as received by civilized nations. Only a few months previously they had murdered in cold blood two English officers travelling in their country, for which crime they had been made to give ample reparation. Since then they have put to death other Europeans. These, then, were the sort of gentry awaiting my arrival, and with whom I had to negotiate on a matter affecting what they considered their peculiar privilege of "working their cruel will" on prisoners captured by their braves in war.

The interpreter looked very uncomfortable, and turned pale when his eye rested on the shore, which we were quickly

nearing, and well he might. As I stated, the Soomaulies lined the beach, and the crowd was a terrible-looking mob, if incensed, to have to face. Not a word was spoken as the boat was pulled rapidly by the well-disciplined crew, who, although not aware of the full extent of the danger to which they were about to be exposed, yet looked with uneasiness at the threatening muster of savages awaiting to greet us on landing. We had often been here before, but never had experienced such a reception. The coxswain at last touched his hat, and observed, "Don't like the looks of them chaps, sir. Never seed a uglier mob."

Nearer we approached, and nearer, till at length the boat grounded on the sand about ten yards from the shore. Our men jumped out into the water, and one of them carried me ashore on his back. I desired nine men and the coxswain to come along with me, and the other three had instructions to shove off into deep water and await our return, and on no account to allow any natives to approach or lay their hands on the cutter. All my body-guard of ten men were armed to the teeth, and we at once set off for the council tent. I desired the interpreter to express my wish to the people surrounding us that they would keep at a respectful distance, and not close around us so that we could with difficulty march along, and in case of emergency could not make use of our arms. When this was settled we proceeded on our way, and at length the guide sent by the chiefs

brought us to the head-quarters of the tribe. Here were assembled all the great warriors and councillors, and I was desired to enter, but not to bring any of my retinue with me inside the tent. With this request I at once refused to comply, and after a great deal of altercation carried my purpose. Four sailors were allowed to go in with me, and the remaining six waited outside.

On being ushered into the interior, I found a large number of men all sitting on the ground with their spears held upright before them in one hand, each person also being armed with a "creese." They were of various ages, from the young warrior without a hair on his face, who had distinguished himself in the last battle, to the aged "Sachem," who, with white beard and palsied head, was listened to with the deference and respect old age always commands among barbarians. There were at least thirty men assembled together before me in a hut of considerable size, but without anything in the shape of furniture or ornament whatsoever. Here were always debated the momentous issues of war or peace with neighbouring tribes, or after a successful raid, the fate of the unhappy prisoners captured in battle. To look at the hard faces of the group, you would say, and truly, that mercy rarely carried the day on such occasions, for, as I glanced round the room on entering, and met the concentrated gaze of the assembled chieftains, my heart misgave me as to the result of my errand. However, I put a bold

face on the matter, and whatever were my anticipations of our fate, no one there, although they all scrutinized my features, could divine what were my thoughts. I knew sufficiently of the Oriental character to be aware that, had I shown any flinching or signs of a submissive spirit, I should have received scant courtesy, or even mercy, and might have been sent back with every token of humiliation.

They knew right well what was my mission, but, nevertheless, one of them demanded why I had come there, and who sent me. Before replying, I sat myself down in the circle, and then, through the interpreter, made a short harangue, stating wherein they had offended the British Government, and that I had been despatched to demand the immediate release of the prisoners held by them, as they were members of a tribe under the protection of the Queen of England. They listened attentively, albeit the younger members of the council frequently interrupted me by exclamations and gestures expressive of their wrath, and some even got up as if to leave the assembly, grasping their spears in a menacing manner.

This conduct in the outset boded ill for my success in carrying my point. They were restrained by the elders from further giving vent to their tempers, and at length subsided into quietude. The innate dignity of some races of savages is remarkable. Under circumstances the most trying and even humiliating, they always preserve the same "*grand seigneur*"

air, as devoid of condescension as of familiarity or vulgarity. This lofty demeanour is very observable among the Soomaulie race. When I had finished, they all conversed together in a rapid, excited manner for a short time, gesticulating freely, as is their wont, and then one of the oldest and most majestic-looking of the chieftains addressed me. He was a spare, gaunt man, with a hook nose and eagle eye, and a most commanding presence. His words were listened to with rapt attention by the natives, and he evidently was a man of mark among them.

He counselled delay, and, addressing me, said that his tribe had the highest respect for the Political Resident and the British flag, but he did not quite see that this was a subject on which we ought to negotiate. The prisoners were theirs, won by their sword and spear, and they could do what they liked with them. At this expression of opinion from so high an authority there was a loud murmur of approval from his sympathising audience. When this was somewhat checked, he proceeded to damp the ardour of the aspiring young warriors round him by saying that, nevertheless, they did not purpose to refuse point-blank the demands of the British Government, but wished to have time to think it over and weigh well their response. When he concluded his speech, another and younger man got up and stated his views. He without doubt represented the bellicose, as the first speaker did the more moderate section of the commu-

nity, for his words were hostile and uncompromising, while his manner of speech was blunt, not to say insolent. He vaunted of the might and superiority of his people in war, and boasted of their recent successes. Then, turning to me, he asked why the Resident did not come in person to make his requests, and inquired sneeringly if I was the captain of the man-of-war.

His rudeness incensed me, and I refused to answer his last question, informing the assembly that I was duly accredited by my superior officers, and that my words would be backed up were it necessary by deeds on the part of my government, as they before had good cause to remember. The interpreter, I have reason to believe, to a certain extent modified the point of my last observation, but, nevertheless, a scene of great confusion ensued. Many of the chiefs rose up with angry haste, and, throwing the end of their single robe over their shoulders, grasped their spears with ominous significance, while others of them standing together in knots, commenced talking together in hurried whispers. The assembly seemed as if on the point of breaking up. At the earnest solicitations of the elders, however, the juniors at length quieted down a little, and order being restored, the debate was resumed.

I had cooled down also, and saw that our position was becoming very critical. The interpreter implored me in English to try and modify the impression I had created, as

our lives would be certainly sacrificed to the fury of the mob, for expressions to that effect were freely bandied about. Addressing the more moderate section of my hearers, I said I had not been sent on this errand to threaten, and nothing was further from my wish than to do so; also that I thought it would be better that both parties should adopt a conciliatory tone in discussing the question. A messenger was at this time despatched from the council-chamber, and shortly returned and communicated with some members of the conclave. The result of this was a request that I would adjourn the meeting to hear what some chiefs who were not present had to say concerning the matter under discussion. I agreed to this proposition, and we all marched out of the hut into the open air and towards a spot distant about a quarter of a mile. I was only too glad to leave the hot room and breathe the fresh air, although not reassured by the whispered declaration of the interpreter that we were going to our deaths. It mattered not, however, in our then position whither we went, for had they made up their minds to murder us all, they could have done so just as well while we were on our return march to the boat as when we reached, like sheep driven to the shambles, the spot selected for our immolation. This being the case, the only result of refusing to do as desired would have been to hasten the catastrophe. I addressed a few words to my men not on any account to break their ranks, and we all kept close to

one another, although the crowd waiting outside hustled and pushed against us.

We soon arrived at a small hollow, where about a dozen of the chiefs were gathered together. Every man, according to the custom of the nation, sat in dignified silence, wrapped in his long loose robe, and holding his spear with the shield of strong hide lying at his side. I repeated what I had said before with the like result. There was much angry controversy first as to my demands. These seemed to be carried by a large majority in a sense opposed to a peaceful solution, for although they did not specifically refuse them, yet they would not accede to them. At length came the last and most difficult part of my mission. This was to inform them that the Mahi would remain in the harbour of Berberah for twenty-four hours after my return on board, to give them an opportunity of reconsidering their resolve as to delivering up the prisoners; that at the end of that time she would make sail for Aden, and the Resident purposed despatching a ship or two carrying a heavy battery of guns to fire upon and destroy their town. I had received express orders to issue the above notice as the ultimatum, and I confess it was with a serious misgiving that I delivered myself to this effect. When the interpreter learnt what I had to say, a deadly pallor spread itself over his dark face; he trembled visibly with fear, and positively refused to give such a message, saying it would be the signal

for our butchery. I insisted on his doing as he was ordered, and to frighten the unhappy man into compliance, told him that he would not be allowed to return on board the schooner, and would also be discharged from government employ, on my reporting his disobedience at head-quarters. He hesitated, muttered something about his "*nusseeb*," or fate, and gathering courage from despair, at length faltered out my message.

The words were hardly out of his unwilling lips when a murmur of disapprobation deepened into a roar of anger as the threat was passed from mouth to mouth. It was the crisis of our fate, and we nerved ourselves for what might be in store for us, determining not to be the aggressors, but to sell our lives, were we attacked, as dearly as might be. Our little band was formed in close order, shoulder to shoulder, facing outwards with their muskets at the "Order," while I half drew my sword, keeping my hand on my revolver. Calmly but with beating hearts we awaited the mad rush of the enraged Africans. Well we knew that any resistance we could make would be absolutely futile, for, to use an expressive but homely phrase, they could "have eaten us up without any salt," so overpowering were the odds against us. I gave strict orders that no man should raise his musket or draw his cutlass, or use any gesture that might indicate an intention on our part to commence hostilities, but to "keep a sharp look-out to windward."

There was a movement in our direction of the party who had all along been inimical towards us. "Creeses" were drawn, and clubs clutched, and fierce looks expressive of hatred and a bloodthirsty desire to annihilate us there and then, were bent on me and my small party of ten English sailors. For my part, I felt that the die was cast, and that our moments on God's earth were few. Who could look on the scowling, sinewy warriors itching for our hearts' blood without a quickening of the pulse, and a clenching of the teeth, and a horrid feeling of despair? Still we kept an undaunted front to our foes, looking like a white speck in that surging ocean of black and ferocious Soomaulies.

Steadily we stood our ground, although the mob swayed backwards and forwards like an angry sea. The chief to whom I had given such dire offence by my plain speaking in the council-chamber, and who was foremost in hostile action as well as speech, was doing his utmost to influence his compeers to attack us. I marked the man, for I could not well mistake his hard, cruel face, only lighted up with one deep-sunken eye (the other, I subsequently learnt, had been extinguished in a fight with a warrior of his own tribe), and he had already succeeded by his fiery eloquence in persuading a party to follow him in the onslaught, when help came to us from an unexpected quarter.

As they came bearing down on our ranks, suddenly an old chieftain threw himself before me, and, raising his

shield, with energetic gestures, and words thundered out in tones that electrified us, so sonorous and clearly distinct were they above the tumult, implored his countrymen to have a care what they were about to do, for, said he, the British Government would take signal vengeance for such a treacherous act as murdering one of their officers sent as an envoy on a peaceful mission. "Let them," he continued, "put to death their prisoners taken in war, but not commit a deed in a moment of passion that would draw down upon them the dire and terrible revenge of the English." He recalled to their recollections the heavy pecuniary fine they had only recently paid, the blockade of their coast, and the injury caused thereby to trade, and also the fact that the murderers had been asked for by the authorities at Aden, who would not again take a refusal. Finally, for his part, he washed his hands of the affair, and those who put us to death might look to it, for they would be ultimately given up, and share the fate that had befallen their companions.

The last part of his appeal had a visible effect on the throng, and though our one-eyed friend raved and used his utmost endeavours to instigate his partisans to back him up, their ardour seemed damped, and they hung back, and refused to come on. This sable Nestor had spoken words of sage counsel, and, like his prototype in the *Iliad*, he was heard respectfully by his audience. Oil had been thrown on the troubled waters, and time given to reflect soberly on the

consequences of such fatal precipitancy. I then informed the assembled chiefs that I had only to add that I would return and inform the Resident of their unwillingness to accede to his request, and their desire to confer with him in person, and then expressed my intention, if they had nothing further to communicate, to march back to the boat.

No one replied to me, but I firmly believe that had my men, during the past very trying minutes, shown the white feather for one moment, or even in the slightest degree exhibited signs of fear, we should have been massacred on the spot. The brave fellows shouldered their arms, and we began our return journey. The distance was not far to the shore, but the natives crowded round us so that locomotion was very difficult, and we wended our way at a snail's pace. It would never have done to push these Soomaulies roughly on one side, for they are a fiery race, and in the existing state of affairs it would have taken a very small spark to cause the whole encampment to have blazed up. Their hatred was only smothered through fear of the consequences, and the chief who had befriended us implored me to order my men not to arouse the sleeping demon in the armed mob by any impatient pushing aside or hustling. This of course I did, but it was unnecessary, for the Jacks were cautious and good-tempered.

At length, when we got near the beach, some of the most hostile among the black warriors hustled us so viciously,

and brandished their arms about us in such a threatening manner—notably a one-eyed fellow, who, the interpreter subsequently informed me, had, like another Hamilcar, sworn ceaseless hostility against the Feringhees—that I had much difficulty in restraining the animosity of my body-guard. One brawny fellow, the petty officer of the party—a gunner's mate he was, by the same token—implored me to allow him to knock him down with the stock of his musket. As these two stood fiercely eying one another, the situation was something like that portrayed in those humorous lines :—

> "The Earl of Chatham, with his sword drawn,
> Was waiting for Sir Richard Stralfan;
> Sir Richard, eager to be at 'em,
> Was waiting for the Earl of Chatham!"

Once or twice I was rather rudely opposed in my progress, but our ally had numerous friends who managed to get us along, and to our great joy we at last stood at the water's edge. I signalled to the boat to approach, and we waded up to our knees, and jumped in without delay.

What an inexpressible feeling of relief came over me when I once again found myself on salt water! I can never forget the sudden revulsion from a condition of anxiety to comparative safety. Not until we pushed off were we out of all danger, for the Soomaulies followed us into the water, and even up to our boat. It was strange to

see them, for up to the last moment they had not made up their minds to let us go in safety; the wretches were thirsting for our blood, and it is a fact that when we had tumbled into the cutter the best way we could with our firearms half-a-dozen men laid their hands on the gunwale and attempted to detain her. Our time had now come! we were on our native element, and, need I say, a smart application of the butt-ends of our muskets on the knuckles of these dubious-minded gentry caused them to loosen their hold, and clutch, when too late, their double-edged 'creeses," which had, however, lost all terrors for us. A shout of baffled rage rose from the multitude as the stout arms of our tars gave way for the Mahi.

On gaining the ship's deck, and once more standing under the protection of the flag of "Old England," my respected commander could scarce refrain from showing his chagrin at my safe return, and at not having the much-desired opportunity of paying me the "last honours" by opening fire on the town of Berberah. My messmates, "jolly good fellows all," heartily congratulated me as they listened to the account of the lucky escape I had experienced.

The schooner sailed the following day for Aden, and the Political Resident speedily made his appearance at Berberah with a squadron to back his demands. This was a species of argument specially adapted for the Soomaulie intellect.

He summoned the recalcitrant chiefs on board the senior naval officer's ship, a sloop-of-war, carrying 18 guns, and they were given the option of meeting him, or else being shelled out of house and home. They embraced the former alternative, and after much debating on the quarter-deck of the man-of-war, yielded up their captives, and averted the threatened "iron hail of shot."

While lying at anchor in Berberah Creek, we used to form fishing parties, and at night would go out with a "seine"; the harbour is well stocked with fish, and besides the amusement of hauling the seine on shore, and gathering the boat load of fish, it added pleasant variety to our slender stock of fresh provisions. I can picture to myself the scene on that lonely desert shore, as a party of us would assemble at midnight, with a bright moon shedding its brilliant but softening rays over land and sea, and, walking up to our waists, would haul "with a will and together," pulling to land some of the queerest-looking denizens of the deep, not excepting, at times, some small sharks. The country about Berberah is infested with wild beasts; lions and leopards abound, and may be observed prowling about the beach during the season the town is deserted. Ostriches are there in plenty, and may frequently be seen stalking about with that long stride peculiar to them. Hyænas, also, and wolves loaf and slouch about during the day, and may be heard during the night; while a great white species of vulture always

puts in an appearance where any carcase or offal is to be found. The sheep in this part of the world are remarkable for a peculiarity in the size and fatness of their tails; these caudal appendages sometimes weigh twenty pounds or more. On board the old Elphinstone the boatswain generally put in a claim for them from the ship's cook, as his perquisite, and turned them to account to grease the masts, spars, etc. The mutton was of first-rate flavour, and the paymaster was able to buy as many sheep as were required for the ship's company for about two or three rupees—some five shillings a-piece.

The harbour of Berberah, though very commodious, is rather narrow for a ship beating out against a head wind, and on one occasion the little Mahi took the ground just as we were about to tack. Notwithstanding all our efforts to get her afloat again, we were, for a length of time, unsuccessful; the tide fell, and left the schooner on her bilge in about two feet of water. By taking her guns out, and lightening her of her cables and stores before the tide flowed again, we were enabled, by the aid of a stream anchor laid out in deep water, to heave the Mahi off, but she was somewhat near becoming a wreck, and gave us what the Yankees would call a "scare."

I have little doubt that a large trade might be advantageously carried on with Berberah and the countries adjacent, were some enterprising Europeans to take the matter in hand,

but it would require some one well acquainted with the language and customs of these people; also great tact to conciliate, and firmness as well as courage would be necessary to command success. At present the trade is almost entirely in the hands of those cunning fellows the Banians, who make enormous profits, and foist upon their ignorant customers trashy trinkets from Birmingham, and inferior blue cotton cloths of Indian manufacture.

It is somewhat singular that the Indian Government do not take more stringent measures to put down the slave trade, which is carried on by these Soomaulies, notwithstanding our treaty with their chiefs in 1855. On the West Coast of Africa, the Home Government always retains a large squadron, at an enormous annual expenditure, to crush this nefarious traffic in human flesh; yet on the East Coast, from Zanzibar to the Straits of Babelmandeb, no sustained effort is made in this direction. While serving in small sailing vessels on the Aden Station, I have taken part in numerous captures of slave buglahs, and as during the existence of the late Indian Navy, there was always a small squadron cruising about those waters, we managed to do much towards effecting its suppression; but I am afraid that from parsimonious motives, no effectual measures are now taken to keep those coasts under the surveillance of Her Majesty's ships. Two small swift steamers employed searching every suspected craft would do all that was required.

In 1860, the Lady Canning, a small gunboat, rescued nearly two hundred slaves, all boys and girls, at a distance of not more than 120 miles from Aden. A Bombay paper writing of this at the time, remarked that some of the finest districts in the interior of Africa were being depopulated, owing to this scourge. A large number of Soomaulie boys and girls are also under our protection. The boys are sent to Bombay, but to dispose of the girls is a serious matter.*

It is also necessary for our *prestige* that Aden should again

* That the slave trade is greatly on the increase in the provinces bordering the Red Sea, and that these provinces obtain a large per centage of victims from Zanzibar and the Eastern Coasts of Africa up to Zeylah and Berberah, is an incontestible fact. Some time since the British Acting Consul-General at Alexandria, instructed by his government to inquire into the matter, disguised himself as a Moorish merchant, and, with one attendant, went up to Cairo, with the intention of examining in his disguise the slave markets of the capital, where he procured the names of a few dealers; but finding that the majority had gone to the Santah fair, he followed them to that town, and there commenced his education in the mysteries of a thriving slave trade.

With no inconsiderable amount of danger to himself he thoroughly sifted the slave markets, and obtained the names of some thirty or forty principal dealers, and then, abandoning his disguise, he handed them to the Mudirieh, or police-officer of the district.

The Mudir, of course, feigned astonishment at the extent of the traffic, and promised that the slaves should be immediately released; but instead of acting thus, he communicated with Ismail Pasha's Mufftich, or chief of the Viceroy's business affairs, and received instructions from him to wait his arrival at Santah before acting. The next day he arrived, and ordered the liberation of the slaves. Whether this was done I cannot say, but it is certain that a few

be made the head-quarters of a Red Sea squadron, as it was from its capture in 1839, up to the time of the abolition of the Indian Navy in 1863. The French have been ever desirous of securing a port, both in the Red Sea and on the African Coast near Zeylah, and have inaugurated the system they adopted with so much success in Siam, that of first gaining a footing, by the purchase of a settlement, which, however small, suffices for a spot whereon to plant their flag, and then unscrupulously annexing and conquering whole tracts of country. We may congratulate ourselves that we possess Aden, the Gibraltar of the East, and Perim, the key of the Red Sea; while we hold these, and while our fleets dominate over the Mediterranean, we need not greatly fear the Suez Canal, which another battle of the Nile would lay at our disposal, not only for the extension of our commerce, but, what is of greater importance, for the maintenance of the integrity of our Indian possessions.

hours saw them back in the dealer's hands; and something more than a report added that the Mufftich found himself richer by about £4,000, and two Circassian slaves.

The Consul addressed Cherif Pasha on the subject, and received the stereotyped reply: "The Government of His Highness was very sorry; it had done all it could, but"—— and so on. From which there is too much reason to fear that those in authority connive at a traffic which, in speeches to anti-slavery deputations, the Viceroy condemns in energetic terms.

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IV.

Massowah and the Red Sea: with an Incident of the Slave Trade.

THE Red Sea has, in our day, been the scene of an activity greater than has been witnessed since the early part of this century, when Sir David Baird landed with his forces to co-operate with the army employed to drive the French from the country, which the ambition of their leader led him to strive to annex to the mighty empire he had already the design of founding in Europe. But in addition to the attention that has been recently attracted to the Red Sea, owing to the Abyssinian expedition, a double interest attaches itself from the laying of the telegraphic cable along its entire course, and the canal which finds an outlet into its waters at Suez. With regard to the canal itself, it may safely be predicted that, with proper supervision and the use of the necessary means, it could be kept open and available for the largest sea-going ships. The engineers of the company assert that a sum

of £800,000 will enable them so to increase the depth that the largest ship of war in the world will pass in safety from the Mediterranean to the Red Sea. No doubt the advantages of this means of communication will be reaped first by those nations nearest to it, and we may look for the resuscitation of great commercial relations with the ports on the coasts of Africa, Arabia, and Persia, relations which existed for so many ages, and which were only put an end to by the disturbances and bad government, or total anarchy which succeeded the dark ages, when Europe was in a state of transition. Italy, Austria, and France would also greatly participate in its benefits; and Sir Bartle Frere, a member of the Council of India, and recently Governor of Bombay, stated in a lecture before the Leamington Philosophical Society, that the greatest enthusiasm existed in Russia respecting the canal, the merchants of Odessa anticipating direct trade by it with India, instead of by Trebizond and the steppes of Siberia. But it is certain that England will be most benefited by the canal, and that it will be productive of perhaps even greater advantages than resulted to this country from the discovery of the route to India by the Cape of Good Hope.

In a long journey a few more hundred miles were not of much moment, and though the Portuguese and the Spanish had a full fortnight's advantage over England in their position, both countries had been beaten by us in the trade to

the East and West Indies. One special feature in connection with the Suez Canal is that it gives iron steamships a great advantage over wooden vessels, and England possesses great resources and facilities for building iron steam-vessels. This country has also special advantages in all that concerns commerce and navigation; and, above all, the Government is in accord with the commercial people of the country. England in the past had beaten nations, which had the advantage both of situation and climate, and we cannot think she will be wanting in the race that will have to be run by those nations which would derive the greatest advantage from the Suez Canal.

The western coast of the Red Sea is little known to modern geographers, and the adjacent seas, were it not for the valuable surveys made by Captains Moresby and Carless, and other officers of the now defunct Indian Navy, would be a very *mare incognita.*

While attached to the Hon. Co.'s ship Warren Hastings, some years ago, that ship anchored off the towns of Massowah and Souakim more than once, and I, in common with my messmates, had greater facilities for visiting the desert shore lying to the north and south of those ports than I cared at the time to avail myself of.

Massowah, or as it is sometimes spelt (for the correct orthography of these Arabic names is uncertain), Massua and Massâwa, is in 15° 37′ north lat., and 39° 37′

east long.; and is situated on a small barren island, distant about 380 miles from Aden, and about 290 from Perim. The last-named place is generally characterized by its unhappy denizens as a "God-forsaken spot," but by contrast with Massowah it is positively cheerful, and endurable as to temperature.

An officer of the Indian Navy once remarked that he considered Pondicherry the hottest place in India, but still that it was nothing to Aden, while Aden again was a trifle to Massowah. He compared the climate of the first to a hot bath; that of the second to a furnace; while the third, he said, could be equalled in temperature by nothing but a place unmentionable to ears polite, and which he certainly then had not visited. Towards the latter end of the month of May the thermometer has been known to stand at 120 degs. Fahrenheit in the shade, and in July and August it ranges much higher. Writing of the town, Mr. Mansfield Parkyn says, "such a climate is, of course, most dangerous, especially so during the summer months, when a number of dangerous diseases prevail, such as dysentery, and the usual fevers of tropical countries."

As for the island of Massowah, it is a mere rock of coral; there are cisterns for collecting the rain water, as there is no spring throughout its length and breadth, but most of these have been allowed to fall into disuse, and the inhabitants of the island are obliged to trust

for their supply to Arkiko, a village on the mainland distant some three or four miles. This water, however, like that supplied from Aden, and from nearly every port in the Red Sea, is brackish, though it is not, I believe, considered unhealthy, and the palate—I speak from experience—gets accustomed to the flavour.

Massowah is open on one side to the sea, while the other is shut in by an amphitheatre of distant hills, sufficiently near, however, not only to prevent its receiving a breath of air from that direction, but also acting as a funnel to collect, as it were, the rays of the sun into the narrow slip of land they enclose. Hence the extreme heat of the place. The town of Massowah is situated on the western extremity of the island, which is scarcely a mile long, measured from east to west, by not quite half the breadth. There is good anchorage in the port, which is capable of accommodating twenty or thirty ships of about 1,000 tons, and another harbour, called Daha-leah, larger than Massowah, also exists to the north of it.

Though the Egyptian Government have only a handful of soldiers at Arkiko, they force the tribes along the coast, and some fifty miles inland, to pay tribute to them, while in return they afford them no protection when devastated by hostile races, to appease whom the unfortunate wretches also pay contribution. The country, in consequence, is miserably poor, and the population very sparse.

The prospect from the sea as you steam into the harbour is soul-depressing to a degree. The eye seeks in vain for vegetation to relieve the sameness of sand and arid desert that stretches around.

The best houses in the town are occupied by the Banians, those thrifty merchants who, owing to their industry and cunning, almost monopolize the trade in this part of the world. These Banians amass large fortunes in a few years, making way for their compatriots when their avarice is satisfied. The Arab merchants of Jiddah, Mocha, and other towns on the opposite coast of the Red Sea, have also their business agents, who reside here.

The public buildings are in no way remarkable. There are some mosques and a bazaar, but everything, artificial as well as natural, bears the same woe-begone, parched-up appearance.

The trade by sea is carried on almost exclusively in Arab dhows, though now and then a full-rigged merchant ship or barque may be seen in the port. The chief exports are ivory and slaves, the latter brought from distant countries in the interior, for Massowah may be said to be the chief port of Abyssinia and the Soudan.

The Turkish, or rather Egyptian Government, not only occupy the island of Massowah, but claim also a nominal sovereignty over the coast for some miles inland.

Though Massowah was always represented, until the ex-

pedition into Abyssinia enlightened our insular ignorance, as forming part of that country, it is, in fact, separated from it by a belt of hot, low-lying desert country. At some points, as at Tajourrah, in the Gulf of Aden, and at Amphilla Bay, to the south of Massowah, this tract of desert widens out to some 250 miles at the former place, and seventy-five miles at the latter. All this inhospitable country is inhabited by the Danakil tribes, who have the character of being as savage and cruel as any in Africa.

Souakim or Souakin, another port on the Red Sea, is situated in a district of the same name in Lower Nubia, and, though of no great extent, is a place of some importance.

It also belongs to the Egyptians, and from thence they keep up their communications with Kassala, a post situated on the extreme north-west frontiers of Abyssinia, and where they have a considerable force, amounting—according to Sir Samuel Baker—to some 6,000 or 8,000 troops. The harbour of Souakim is small, and the reefs about it make the approach dangerous. It is formed by an almost circular creek, with only a narrow inlet to the east, and is of a coral formation. There is a small round island in the centre, on which is built the governor's residence, and some stone houses and huts, while on the adjoining mainland there is another group of huts.

Mr. Hamilton, who visited Souakim in 1854, says the popu-

lation is about 12,000 souls, but I should think he has rather over than under estimated it. We shall doubtless have a full account of Kassala, and detailed information of the present position and future prospects of the Soudan, from the graphic pen of Sir Samuel Baker, when that distinguished traveller and able man has returned from the beneficent mission he has undertaken. Surely no philanthropist could desire a nobler duty than that of being the chief instrument in extinguishing the iniquitous slave traffic which has flourished unchecked in these vast and little-known regions.

The track through the Red Sea for steamers, which alone will be used for navigating these waters, is comparatively free from dangers. From the Straits of Babelmandeb to Suez, the Red Sea in a direct line measures some 1,230 miles in length; the greatest breadth is 192 miles, and at its narrowest, near Ras Mohammed, where the peninsula of Sinai splits it into two, the Red Sea measures only 72 miles across.

Dr. Buist (late a well-known *savan* in India), in a paper to the Geographical Society, states that this inland sea probably derives its name from the fact that large portions of it, as well as of the Arabian Sea, are covered with patches, from a few yards to some miles square, of a blood-red colour, derived from a species of animalculæ particularly abundant in the spring months, and which dye the upper waters of the most intensely blood-red hue that can be conceived. There

is nothing else that would account for the name, and a considerable expanse of this, encountered by an early navigator who had not met with any similar phenomenon elsewhere, would seem warrant enough for its designation.

Ehrenberg also writes concerning this peculiarity. While at Tor, in the vicinity of Mount Sinai, he observed, on the 10th December, 1823, the striking phenomenon of the whole bay, which forms the harbour of Tor, being of a bloody colour. The main sea beyond the coral reef that encloses the harbour was, as usual, colourless. The short waves of the calm sea, during sunshine, carried to the shore a bloody coloured slimy mass, which it deposited on the sands, so that the whole bay, fully half a league in length, at the ebb of the tide, exhibited a blood red border of more than a foot broad. On taking up some of the water itself with glasses, and carrying it to his tent at hand on the sea shore, it was immediately discovered that the colouring was caused by small flakes, scarcely distinguishable, often greenish, sometimes of a lively green, but for the most part of a dark red colour, although the water itself was not stained by them. Hence, no doubt, he says, arises the derivation of its name "Red Sea," though this phenomenon is not permanent, but periodical.

Owing to this inland sea being surrounded by a hard sandy or rocky shore without a rivulet, and scarcely a drop of rain falling into it from year to year, its waters are remark-

able for their transparency and purity, though they are not, as is generally understood, more salt than the waters of the Atlantic.

The north-east Monsoon prevails from October to May or June, and is at its freshest in February, while towards May it sometimes ceases altogether. North-westerly winds blow in June and July, and in August there are sometimes long periods of calms.

There are numerous islands in the southern extremity of the Red Sea; also in the vicinity of Massowah there is the Dhalac Archipelago, consisting of innumerable reefs and islets, and on the opposite coast the Farsan Archipelago, scarcely less numerous. On the small island of Gibel-Teer, in latitude 15° 30′, there is a volcano still smoking, as it has been since 1774, when visited by Bruce. Indeed, all the mountains of both shores of the Red Sea, and the islands, are of volcanic formation, and we have seen that Aden, as also the island of Perim, are undoubtedly of the same character.

In 1846 a violent eruption was seen on the island of Gibel-Zugger, situated in latitude 14°. A little to the south of this is Harnish Island; and in latitude 26° 20′ north, in the upper part of the Red Sea, are the "Two Brothers," coral islets about sixty feet above the level of the sea.

I have cruised past all these islands many times, and have sailed almost within pistol shot of them, but on no occasion

have I ever landed; though it is certain that very seldom has the foot of a European pressed their rocky uninviting shores, yet as geological studies they are of great interest to the man of science. A little to the southward of Massowah, in Annesley Bay, there are the ruins of an ancient Greek settlement called Adulis; but I will not dwell any further on this place, as it has been expatiated upon by special correspondents, in official reports, and by military gentlemen who can handle the pen as deftly as they wield the sword. The bay in which it is situated is less sterile than any other point of the entire coast from Souakim to the Straits of Babelmandeb. The anchorage is, however, bad, owing to the great depth of the water.

There is also the Bay of Amphilla further to the southward, which has been described in official reports as "the most miserable spot on the Coast of Abyssinia," than which no words can convey a more appalling condition of sterility. I am happy to say that while cruising along these shores my mind was not reduced to a yet "lower deep" of depression by a contemplation of its superlative qualities, so I am unable to speak of them from personal observation.

While the Warren Hastings was lying at Massowah, some of the officers, myself among the number, went ashore, to see the lions of the town, but alas! the proportions of these noble animals were found, on inspection, to be microscopically small, and after roaming about the wretched parched-

up lanes, and almost deserted bazaar, we returned on board highly disgusted, sadder if not wiser men. This visit certainly did some good, for it taught us to regard, with feelings somewhat akin to contentment, Aden, the head-quarters of the Red Sea squadron, a place which we had hitherto been unsuccessful in finding epithets sufficiently strong to denounce. Such are the uses of "comparison," concerning which the wise saw lays down the dictum that "they are odious!"

On the occasion of one of our visits to Massowah, soon after the Warren Hastings left the harbour—in fact, on the following morning,— the chief engineer reported to the first lieutenant that two natives from that port had secreted themselves among the coals in the hold, and calling to the "tindal" of his men, he brought out a couple of miserable, unhappy-looking creatures, who cringed down at the captain's feet, and with outstretched hands, and in a language which, though unintelligible, required no interpreter to explain its meaning, piteously prayed for mercy and freedom to regain their country and friends. Upon inquiry, we learnt that the "seedies" on board the Warren Hastings, as the negro coal-trimmers are called, had not only supplied them with food, but, with the good-nature characteristic of these Africans, had also secreted them on board.

Of course there was nothing to be done but to give these slaves, for such they were, their freedom; they were free indeed

the moment they set foot on the quarter-deck, and the glorious flag of our country waved over them. The fugitives were taken on to Bombay. During the passage I took some interest in them, and through the medium of one of the seedies, who spoke the dialect of one of these quondam slaves, I learnt some particulars of his history, which I subsequently communicated to the captain, and which induced that officer to take measures by which the African was restored to his family and friends.

The poor fellow, who, by the way, appeared very intelligent, stated that he came from a part of the continent of Africa distant some three hundred miles from Zanzibar. He said that about eight years before his escape on board the Hon. Co.'s ship Warren Hastings, he had, while living in his own country, married a woman of his tribe, and that he lived very happily for three years. They had two children during this period, and he had no wish ungratified.

One day he was out in the fields attending to his daily work, when he was surprised by a large party of men, belonging to a tribe of whom he knew nothing; he could not even speak the language in which they addressed him. He was seized, and in spite of his protestations was carried off and put in irons. He found two or three of his friends among the large number of prisoners they had bound in pairs, and one of his countrymen told him that these men were slave dealers, and that they would be taken to the sea-coast

and sold, and carried away from their country. And so it was. After a journey of about twenty days, during which they were much ill-treated, being half starved and beaten if they did not march quick enough to suit their brutal captors, the whole party crossed over into the island of Zanzibar, and were put up for sale in the slave market in the town of the same name. Being a young and strong man, with plenty of work in him, he fetched a high price, and was purchased by an Arab slave merchant, who took him off to a dhow then in the port. There he found a large number of wretches like himself; the hold of the craft was crowded, and he wondered how he could be expected to live for even a week in such confined quarters. The dhow was a small vessel of her class, and yet there were eighty-seven human beings crowded into her. To his horror forty-four more were brought off and crammed below, and then the sorrow-laden vessel set sail on her voyage. The fugitive said no words could depict a tithe of the unutterable misery they endured during the long voyage of several weeks.

When out of port some days, they encountered a heavy gale, during which the sea swept over the decks, nearly causing the craft to founder, and the hatches were battened down to prevent her filling.

The scene that ensued baffles description. He fainted from suffocation and exhaustion, and on recovering found himself on deck by the gangway. Fancying he was dead,

the rascally slave merchant had ordered him to be flung overboard. During the short interval the hatches had been kept on thirty-two slaves had died, and it was a marvel how one had survived to tell the tale.

The avaricious slave-master had paid for thus crowding together his purchases, and fearful of losing more of his investment in flesh and blood, took measures to ventilate the hold better, and allowed the survivors to breathe the fresh air on deck longer, and at more frequent intervals.

Everything has an end, even the greatest of human ills, and at length the dhow reached Massowah. This poor man informed me that during the last fortnight of the passage he had become so inured to the hardships of his position, that he half regretted having arrived at his destination; so strangely constituted and such creatures of habit are we! His mind, relieved from present bodily suffering, reverted to his once happy home, and he felt sad and sick at heart as he thought that he could expect never more to see those dear to him. Like the dying gladiator in those superb lines of Byron,—

> "His eyes
> Were with his heart, and that was far away;
> . . . . .
> Where his rude hut by the Danube lay,
> There were his young barbarians all at play,
> There was their Dacian mother."

And so, overworked, ill-fed, and constantly subjected to

insult and ill-usage passed five long dreary years. He once made an effort to escape from thraldom, and sought to return on foot to his people and friends, but the attempt ended in failure; he was caught and brought back, and from that time was worked harder by his master, and treated worse than before.

At length the Hon. Co.'s ship Warren Hastings entered the harbour, and he resolved, with what success we have seen, to escape in her to the land of the Feringhees, where he understood slavery had no existence. "In this connection," as the Yankees say, it is certainly singular that England, the power that expends hundreds of thousands of pounds annually in efforts to put down the slave trade on the West Coast of Africa, should do almost nothing to eradicate the same evil on the opposite side of the Cape of Good Hope.

Why should all our compassion be lavished on the negroes who are exported in such gradually diminishing numbers from the Bight of Benin, and the pestilential coasts adjacent, and not a particle be reserved for his equally unhappy fellow-sufferer on the eastern shores of the same continent?

Does not Exeter Hall consider him also "a man and a brother"? and if so, why does it not advocate his claims? In a recent number of the *African Times* is the following, bearing on this important question:—

"It is stated that there are always thousands of slaves lying ready for shipment, waiting for Arab dhows on the

coasts of Zanzibar territories; and it is but too well known that the cruelties and horrors of this Eastern Africa and Red Sea slave trade, as conducted by the Arabs, far surpass any ever heard of on the West Coast. We cannot understand why the Sultan of Zanzibar, within reach, as he is, of British power, should still be allowed to carry on, as he does, whether directly or indirectly, this murderous traffic, to the influence of which the lamented Dr. Livingstone has fallen a victim.* Until the slave trade be exterminated on all the African coasts, and that from Kano (in Central Africa) to Fezzan, as well as that in the Upper Nile countries, be put an end to, there can be no successful efforts made to introduce civilizing agencies throughout the greater portion of the African continent. Mohammedanism now stands forth almost alone as the patron and conductor of the foreign slave trade. The trade is carried on by Mohammedans to supply the Mohammedan markets; and unless there be a stronger pressure by Great Britain on the Mohammedan powers relative to this traffic, we fear it will continue until the Mohammedan powers themselves disappear. Sometimes we are afraid there is no longer any earnestness in high quarters in England, with regard to the final suppression of this prolonged curse and woe of Africa since the death of Lord Palmerston. Certain it is, that we now hear of its enormities, in the parts we have alluded to, and less—much

* Alluding to his supposed murder.

less, alas! of any efforts of Great Britain against it. It will be a deep disgrace to this country should she become indifferent about the extinction of the African foreign slave trade."

Sir Samuel Baker, in his interesting work on the "Albert Nyanza," gives a very graphic, and but too truthful account of the system of operations by which the slave trade is carried on in the Soudan and neighbouring countries, of which Massowah and Souakim are the chief ports. A man without means forms an expedition, and borrows money for this purpose at 100 per cent., after this fashion. He agrees to pay the lender in ivory at one-half its market value. Having obtained the required sum, he hires several vessels, and engages from 100 to 300 men, composed of Arabs and runaway villains from distant countries, some of them Europeans. He purchases guns and large quantities of ammunition for his men, together with a few hundred pounds of glass beads. The piratical expedition being complete, he pays his men five months' wages in advance. His men receive this partly in cash and partly in cotton stuffs for clothes, at an exorbitant price; every man has a strip of paper, upon which is written, by the clerk of the expedition, the amount he has received both in goods and money, and this paper he must produce at the final settlement. The vessels sail down the Nile about December, and on arrival at the desired locality the party disembark and proceed

into the interior, until they arrive at the village of some negro chief, with whom they establish an intimacy.

Charmed with his new friends, the power of whose weapons he acknowledges, the negro chief does not neglect the opportunity of seeking their alliance to attack a hostile neighbour; marching throughout the night, guided by their negro hosts, they bivouac within an hour's march of the unsuspecting village, doomed to an attack about half an hour before break of day. The time arrives, and quietly surrounding the village while its occupants are still sleeping, they fire the grass huts in all directions, and pour volleys of musketry through the flaming thatch. Panic-stricken, the unfortunate victims rush from their burning dwellings, and the men are shot down like pheasants in a battue; while the women and children, bewildered in the danger and confusion, are kidnapped and secured. The herds of cattle, still within their kraal, are easily disposed of, and are driven off with great rejoicing, as the prize of victory. The women and children are then fastened together, the former secured in an instrument called a "sheba," made of a forked pole, the neck of the prisoner fitting into the fork, secured by a cross piece lashed behind, while the wrists, brought together in advance of the body, are tied to the pole. The children are then fastened by their necks with a rope attached to the women, and thus form a living chain; in which order they are marched to the head-quarters in company with the captured herds.

The trader's party then dig up the floors of the huts, now lying in ruins, to search for valuables. With their booty they return to their negro ally, and present him with thirty or forty herd of cattle, and perhaps a slave girl or two. Then they commence to trade with their newly-found friend. The cattle are exchanged for ivory—a tusk for a cow—a profitable business, as the cows cost nothing. The slaves and two-thirds of the captured cattle belong to the trader, but his men claim as their perquisites one-third of the animals. These having been divided, the slaves are put up to public auction among the men, who purchase such as they require; the amount being entered on the papers of the purchasers, to be reckoned against their wages. To avoid the exposure, should the document fall into the hands of the Government or European Consuls, the amount is not entered as for the purchase of a slave, but is divided for fictitious supplies. An attack or razzia, such as described, generally leads to a quarrel with the negro ally, who in his turn is murdered and plundered by the trader—his women and children becoming slaves. The trader's men being paid in slaves, the wages should be nil, and there should be a surplus of four or five hundred slaves for the trader's own profit, worth on an average five or six pounds each. The purchasers and dealers in slaves are mostly Arabs.

The wretched captives are sent across the country to different places along the banks of the Nile, and they are taken

to Souakim, Massowah, and other ports on the Red Sea, thence to be shipped for Arabia and Persia. Very many are sent to Cairo. Sir Samuel Baker says further, that though the Turkish officials pretend to discountenance slavery, every house in Khartoum is full of slaves, and the Egyptian officers have actually been in the habit of receiving a portion of their pay in slaves, precisely as the slave-stealers themselves were paid by their employers. The slave-dealers in Cairo itself drive a roaring trade in human flesh and blood, but the Government choose to turn their blind eye in that direction.

The Viceroy of Egypt, who is without doubt the most liberal-minded man in his government, has, by the appointment of Sir Samuel Baker with plenary powers, to suppress the traffic in the Soudan, given to the world a guarantee of his intention to act up to his promises.

On the arrival at Bombay of the Warren Hastings, our captain interested himself about both the runaways. For one of the fugitives he got a situation in an hotel; and on inquiry, learning that a sloop-of-war of the Indian Navy was about to proceed to Zanzibar, the captain secured a passage in her for the other, who went by the name of Bobo among the sailors, and her commander, an old friend of his, promised to look after his passenger.

Old Colonel Hamerton was at that time our very efficient Consul and Political Resident at Zanzibar, and—by the same token, as Paddy would say—many pleasant hours

has the writer of these reminiscences passed in that residency, where the gallant old host dispensed his hospitalities after the time-honoured Anglo-Indian fashion, that is to say, with an unstinting hand. He has gone to his rest, now more than thirteen years ago. Peace to the ashes of this Englishman! who—exiled from the society of his countrymen, save at those rare intervals when, as in our case, a British ship-of-war looked in at the port to see that all was going on satisfactorily—for many years worthily represented Her Majesty, and his more immediate masters, the Hon. East India Company. A great and, in too many cases, an unacknowledged debt of gratitude does this country, and the cause of humanity, owe to those of her sons who live, and often die, in these out-of-the-way places. Colonel Hamerton was a great favourite with the Sultan Sayyid Said—indeed, he was a power in the state only second to the Imaum himself,—and induced that potentate to throw the ægis of his protection over the once friendless slave; and so Bobo was forwarded on to his "ain countrie," under an escort. On his being restored to his family and friends, he sent a message to the captain, informing him of his safe arrival, and expressing his undying gratitude to all concerned in his release. So much for Bobo. Let us hope "he lived happy ever after."

V.

Jeddah: the City in Peace and War.

THERE are few more interesting towns in either the east or west coast of the Red Sea than Jeddah, as to the orthography and correct pronunciation of which, by the way, there is no little difference; the Arabs—who I suppose ought to be the best judges, unless, following the practice for which our neighbours, the French, all over the world are noted, we Anglicize the proper name—the Arabs spell and pronounce it Djidda; but to avoid the charge of pedantry, and as it is better known under the form of spelling which I have adopted in the heading of this article, I will speak of it as Jeddah.

That part of the sea coast of Arabia which bounds the Red Sea on the east is divided into four grand divisions, Arabia Petrœa, Hedjaz, Tehama, and Yemen; the latter province extends to the shores of the Arabian Sea, and embraces in its confines our stronghold of Aden. The city of Jeddah is situated about the middle of this shore of the

Red Sea, and has been from the earliest times a place of great importance; commercially, from its good harbour and the thriving trade it carries on with other eastern countries; politically, from the fact of its advantageous situation, the strength of its fortifications in comparison with the other garrisoned ports which fringe the Red Sea, and the numerous population which it supports; and from a religions point of view, from its proximity to Mecca, the distance being only some sixty miles to that holy place, the earthly goal of all good Mohammedans, the spot towards which in their old age all their aspirations and wishes tend, and to set their foot within whose sacred walls all "true believers," after a long life of weariness and toil, bend whatever may remain to them of the failing energies of soul and body. What visions of rapture and religious adoration does not that one word, Mecca, conjure up to the mind of the aged Mussulman! His one remaining desire is to have strength enough, and accumulate sufficient funds, to enable him to take up his staff, sling his wallet over his shoulder, now no longer erect and firm but bent with the weight of years, and make the pilgrimage to the prophet's shrine, there in blissful ecstasy to worship at the "Kaaba" in the sacred temple.

Mecca boasts itself to be the birthplace of the extraordinary man who lies buried at Medina, and founded a religion which has swayed the destinies of mighty empires, and which is now the accepted creed of hundreds of millions

of our fellow-men, though in truth its glories are now waning before the pure light of our religion. These devotees crowd to Mecca from all parts of the East; caravans defile into the city from the north, from the east, and from the south, all laden with men, women, and children, panting to catch sight of the golden minaret of the great Mosque; and as the rising orb of day, gilding its topmost pinnacle with a flood of glorious light, discloses for the first time the sacred city, the poor fanatical crowd bend their heads down into the dust, and with a burning religious fervour pray to Allah and to Mahomet his prophet.

The annual caravans for Mecca from Damascus and Baghdad, the capitals of the provinces of Syria and Mesopotamia, are very extensive, and take their departure from those cities with some ceremony.

The Governor-General of Syria bears among his titles that of "Emir el Hadj" (Prince of the Caravan). A Pasha, who has the title of "Suri Emini," is the bearer of the Sultan's presents for the cities of Medina and Mecca, as the Governor of Syria no longer heads the pilgrimage. The Suri Emini, who is chosen annually, is selected alternately from the retired civil and military Pashas. He takes with him, besides the Sultan's gifts, money and presents to be distributed during the journey of the Caravan among the Bedouin tribes on its route. The date of departure of the Caravan is, according to the Mussulman calendar, fixed

always for the 12th of the month of Chamal. The Suri Emini arrives some time previous at Damascus, where the Governor-General has already prepared for the provisioning and the protection of the pilgrims. For this purpose the Governor summons the chiefs of the principal tribes of the territory through which the Caravan must pass, and arranges with them for the prices of transport and the payment of the escorts.

From the west, pilgrim ships are constantly unloading their densely packed and unsavoury masses of passengers, among whom disease and filth, with oftentimes insufficient food and water, make fearful ravages. These set out from Jeddah, to feast their eyes on the relics, which are preserved by a greedy priesthood, as well at Medina as at Mecca.

A pilgrim ship is a thing to be avoided in eastern waters, and if in taking up your position in Jeddah harbour you happen to pass under the lee of one of these craft before she has unladen her cargo of reeking humanity, the passing breeze is anything but "balmy," and gives one a very unfavourable opinion of what poets call "Gales from Araby the Blest." Should you be of an exploring habit of mind, the stenches which assail your olfactory nerves, on landing in the city of Jeddah itself, are of a character and variety to out-do in intensity and villanousness the smells for which the ancient city of Cologne—Coleridge speaks of seventy distinct stenches,—has been famous from time im-

memorial. There is not much to see on landing; the streets, with the exception of the principal one, are wretchedly dirty and narrow, as in all Arab towns, though perhaps Jeddah is better off in this respect than most places in the so-called "Gorgeous East." The finest houses in the town are the Khans, or caravanserais, where the pilgrims put up when *en voyage* for the Holy Place. Within a short distance of the town is the reputed tomb of Eve, which draws large numbers of devotees.

The trade of Jeddah is very great; sometimes as many as fifty vessels can be seen lying together in the harbour, and the goods imported are of great variety—ranging from slaves, chiefly females to stock the hareems, to cocoa-nut oil. The chief articles we used to purchase, besides "curios," which Englishmen always have a weakness for in the East, were the famous "attar" of roses, sold in small bottles, covered with gilt figures, and carefully sealed up, and the black coral, which is obtained, I believe, alone in Jeddah, and even there always fetches a long price. The attar of roses is a delicious scent, highly prized by oriental beauties; great quantities of some concoction styled "attar" is sold in Europe, but little that is not spurious. I remember once sending as a gift a black coral chain of beads to a lady in England, and receiving, to my disgust, a letter thanking me for the pretty wooden beads. Caravans start almost every day for Mecca, and occasionally for Medina.

The great "big-wig" in Jeddah is the High-priest, or Sultan-Sheriff of Mecca, who, as sovereign of the Beled-el-Harem or "Holy Land," has ruled, or rather misruled, the city for hundreds of years.

During the early part of the century the Wahabees overran and conquered the whole of the country from the Persian Gulf to the Red Sea, and the mighty chief, Sheikh Abdallah Ibrn Saood, was lord and autocrat of the whole of this vast territory; but eventually some of the Great Desert tribes deserted the Wahabee interest, the coalition fell to pieces, and Ibrahim Pasha, at the head of an Egyptian army, inflicted several signal defeats, which turned the conqueror into a fugitive, and broke in pieces the vast fabric of empire.

On one occasion the steam frigate to which I was attached carried the Sultan-Sheriff of Mecca, who could not have been less than seventy years, to Suez. The captain gave up his suite of apartments to the old man, and the wardroom officers turned out of their comfortable berths, to make way for his ladies, for the Patriarch of Islamism could not travel without at least thirty of his wives. The hareem was part of his state, and he was nothing without it. We thought the institution decidedly his better half, though it was a nuisance to turn out of our comfortable quarters. However, "*place aux dames*," and we consoled ourselves by striving to catch a glimpse of the faces of the dusky beauties for whom we had sacrificed our convenience. This amiable desire was

however not destined to be gratified by all of us. The wary old gentleman, who was ancient enough to be the grandpapa of these ill-matched fair ones, was wide awake, and had brought on board, besides about twenty servants, some half dozen hideous eunuchs to keep watch and ward, like game-keepers, over his matrimonial preserves. These ill-favoured creatures, who were all Nubians and as black as ebony, were always on the *qui vive*, and guarded the ladders leading to the precincts of the now sacred wardroom.

The hatchways and sky-lights also were covered over with tarpaulins and flags, and as the eunuchs,—or "tertiumquids," as a facetious writer has called them,—always stood by, and guarded these approaches with "Argus-eyed" keenness, there was little chance of our ever seeing the "moon-faced" houris confined beneath. One evening, however, the fates were more propitious, and I was gratified by a peep into the "*vie intime*" of an Eastern Hareem. It was in this wise. The wind had freshened to half a gale, but the large frigate made good weather of it, and was steaming up the Red Sea at the rate of ten knots an hour. The night also was rather dark, and as I paced the lee side of the quarter-deck, I remarked that the eunuch on guard seemed to be rather drowsy. Poor unfortunate! I thought, the ladies down below there, like some fair ones nearer home, no doubt lead you a pretty life. You must please them, or else they would put "their marks" to a round robin, and you would be discharged, perhaps from

the muzzle of one of his Highness's guns, peeping out of the embrasures at Jeddah; on the other hand, were you to allow the ladies any more freedom than is sanctiond by the rules of the Hareem, which, like the laws of the Medes and Persians, alter not, you would most certainly be bow-strung and very probably strung up by the neck afterwards, that is if you survived the infliction of the torture. Thinking thus charitably I felt less hostile towards the swarthy custodian, who doubtless was much "put upon." While contemplating his woolly head as it nodded now and then—does not the great Jove himself occasionally indulge in the luxury?—under the combined influence of a sleepless night and mayhap a stronger than ordinary dose of opium, taken doubtless to drive away dull care, my attention was directed to one corner of the tarpaulin, which had in some manner been loosened, and which the strong breeze lifted a little, and the next moment dropped back in a coquettish manner. Eolus, the "blustering railer," was in a playful mood, nay, the god seemed to be amorously inclined. I stole up to the "combings" of the hatch, and cast my eye down the opening thus occasionally disclosed. There were about a dozen ladies reclining on the ottomans in the saloon, of all shades of colour, from the fair Georgian,

> "White and red,
> With great blue eyes, a lovely hand and arm,
> And feet so small they scarce seemed made to tread,
> But rather skim the earth,"

to the dusky beauty of India or Egypt, with her delicate fingers tipped with "henna" and her jet-black flowing locks tumbling over her heaving chest and shoulders in profuse tresses.

> "Her eye
> Was large and dark, suppressing half its fire
> Until she spoke, then through its soft disguise
> Flash'd an expression more of pride than ire,
> And love than either."

The conversation was carried on by some two or three of the group in an animated manner, and was interesting, to judge by the loud laughter with which the fair creatures greeted the sallies of the talkers.

The attitudes they assumed, as they lolled about the cushioned seats and sofas, were characterized by all the "abandon" and careless grace of ladies brought up in the luxury and indolence of a seraglio, and taught to do nothing the livelong day, but amuse themselves as well as enforced idleness and devouring *ennui* would permit. As, kneeling on the deck and holding up the corner of the tarpaulin, I was peeping down the skylight, my attention was suddenly roused by an exclamation. I turned round, and there stood beside me the ugly guardian of so much beauty. I got up, and at first felt rather confused, but a bright thought striking me, I began to reprove him in an indignant tone for sleeping on his watch, and threatened to report him for such a gross dereliction from his duty.

The unfortunate eunuch seemed dreadfully alarmed at my thus turning the tables on him, and implored me not to get him into trouble, at the same time requesting me in the most abject manner to get up and leave the spot. The poor wretch trembled with fear, and seemed so alarmed that in compassion I did as he desired, and resumed my duties as officer of the watch.

On our return to Jeddah the High-priest landed with all his numerous wives, and retinue of servants, under a salute of nineteen guns. The ladies left the ship, as they came on board, shrouded from the crown of the head to the sole of the feet in long loose garments, and led by the hand of their male attendants. The Patriarch was much pleased with his treatment during his sojourn in the frigate, and sent off fresh provisions, and large quantities of vegetables for the sailors, while he presented the captain and all the officers with handsome gifts in recognition of our courtesy, and of the inconvenience which he had suffered in providing for his accommodation. These presents were all, however, returned, much to our disgust; but there is an order in force in the navy, by which British officers are not allowed to take any gifts from foreign princes or potentates.

When I first entered Jeddah harbour, the ship I was on board of nearly came to grief, for the navigation is very intricate, and vessels entering generally take a pilot on board. There are numerous rocks and shoals, but owing, however, to

the clearness of the water, which is a bright green above these obstructions, they are visible some distance, if a good look-out is kept. Many years ago H.M.'s ship Forte struck and was lost on one of these shoals. One range of reefs is called the outer gate; and as soon as you have passed it, the inner gate, which is formed by two shoals not more than one hundred yards asunder, is visible. At first it seems as if there was no passage between the formidable reefs which show their terrible rows of gagged teeth within a few feet of the water's edge, but good seamanship and smart handling will carry a ship inside the gates, and then there is plenty of water and good anchorage within.

When, some time subsequent to this visit, I again saw the famous "Gates" as we rounded to, inside the formidable line of breakers and within shelling distance of the city, I thought under what different circumstances we had paid our last visit. Then, as soon as our sails were furled and the anchor dropped, our guns thundered out a royal salute, in honour of the Pasha's flag flying above his palace, and the compliment was returned by an equal number of discharges from the ordnance mounted on the forts. On this visit, paid at an interval of a year and a half in another vessel, the scene which presented itself as the two ships of war slowly steamed along with all sail taken in and the grim cannon manned by the respective guns' crews—for the seamen stood there in well-trained groups, handspikes in hand, and with cutlasses girt

round their waists—the scene was eminently suggestive of the power and silent majesty, which perhaps is more forcibly portrayed in a man-of-war, "cleared for action," than in any other handiwork of man. The last time we burnt powder here, the harbour wore a holiday aspect, and the small clouds of smoke curled overhead in fantastic rings (an effect the captains of the guns produce by greasing the "chase"), but the discharges of the cannon were regulated by the First Lieutenant, who, watch in hand, stood on the bridge, and every twenty seconds gave the order "Fire!" to the gunners. *Now*, all that was changed, the black mouths of the great guns were unmuzzled, the "dogs of war" were "let slip," and over the big baize cartridges round shot and shell weighing 56 lbs. each had been rammed, and a shower of iron and fire, grim messengers of death, were to be rained on the devoted town. The measured boom of "saluting time" was to be changed for the deafening storm of "quick firing"; and when the crews of the 68-pounders had received orders to open fire on the town, the "Artillery's dull roar" was only to be silenced by the submission of the haughty Pasha, who refused to accede to our just demands. The man-of-war to which I was attached in 1858 steamed into the harbour with the object of showing the insolent Arab *canaille* who massacred our countrymen in that year, that though the British nation is courteous to all powers, even to such insignificant potentates as Sheikhs and

High-priests, yet that it can revenge an injury in the most summary and terrible manner. The arm of Britain that wields the thunder-bolt of her naval power is a long-reaching arm, and its blows are swift, sudden, and decisive. There is no sea where the grand old "cross of red" may not be seen flaunting ever gaily, "ready, aye, ready."

Doubtless most of my readers will remember the British bombardment of Jeddah during the height of the Indian mutiny, and the occasion which gave rise to so high-handed a proceeding on our part; but to such as have forgotten the treacherous deed of massacre, and the punishment which ensued on its commission, I will briefly narrate the circumstances.

On the night of the 7th of June, 1858, some Christians swam on board H.M.'s ship Cyclops, which fortunately happened to be lying at Jeddah at the time, bringing the intelligence that the Mohammedans of the town, in the absence of Namick Pasha, the governor (who had gone off to Mecca with nearly all his troops), had begun to massacre the Christian inhabitants. Accordingly, at daylight, Captain Pullen, who commanded the Cyclops, sent in her boats armed with 6-pounders, and manned with strong crews. As they approached the beach some Turkish soldiers warned them off, stating that the town was in a state of revolt, and that the government troops remaining in the place were numerically not strong enough to give the Christians any protection.

The boats notwithstanding still approached, and when they reached the shore were surrounded by a mob of some 200 or 300 men, who attempted to drag the crews out of the boats. Our sailors, however, resisted the fanatical crowd, and managed to keep them off, killing and wounding a great number of their assailants; in the meanwhile they received a message from the Turkish Lieutenant-Governor, to the effect that the English Consul, with all his family, had been murdered the previous evening at eight o'clock. The French Consul, the messenger stated, had been attacked at nine o'clock by the brutal mob, fresh from the slaughter of his English colleague. The Consul and his wife were killed on the spot, and their daughter severely wounded by a sabre-cut on her face whilst defending her father, whose murderer, however, the heroic girl, worthy to be the countrywoman of Joan of Arc, succeeded in killing with her own hand.

I might state here that this heroine ultimately recovered, and reached France in safety, and there the Emperor Napoleon, with that determination he has always evinced to reward merit, wheresoever and by whomsoever displayed, settled a handsome pension upon her for life.

The Deputy-Governor sent a message off to the Captain of the English steam frigate, begging that he would not land his men or fire on the town, as he had the unfortunate young French lady and upwards of twenty other Christians at his house, and only eight soldiers to defend them,

but requested that he would wait until the return of the Pasha with the troops under his command. This course the British officer adopted. On the arrival of Namick Pasha, the remaining Christians, twenty-four in number, including the French lady, were sent on board the Cyclops. The Pasha also sent word to say that he had arrested 300 of the townspeople on suspicion. It was confidently stated at the time at Aden, and generally credited all over India, that the massacre was instigated by some escaped rebels from Delhi. As soon as the Christians were safe on board the Cyclops, a strong party of seamen and mariners were landed, marched through the town, and hoisted the French and English flags at the respective consulates, under a royal salute from the Turkish authorities. Captain Pullen, the commander of the man-of-war, immediately sailed for Suez with the fugitives who had taken refuge on board his ship, and communicated with the British Government by telegraph. Having received instructions from the Admiralty, and being empowered by the French Government to act on behalf of the Emperor, Captain Pullen lost no time, but sailed from Suez on the evening of the 13th July, on his return to Jeddah. He arrived at that port on the 23rd, early in the morning, and brought to an anchor at once. The Honourable Company's ship Lady Canning, to which I had been transferred from my former ship, took part in the operations that ensued.

The Lady Canning had brought the Morocco Princes to Jeddah, and was awaiting their return from Mecca, whither they had betaken themselves to worship at the caaba. The festivities of the Kourban Bairam—the feast of the sacrifice—were then at their height; the town wore a holiday appearance, and the native shipping in the harbour was decked out with gay flags.

It was soon ascertained that Namick Pasha was at Mecca, but no time was to be lost, and a letter was at once despatched to the Lieutenant-Governor for transmission to the Pasha, informing the latter that Captain Pullen had come to the place, by order of his Government, to demand, on the part of England and France, the immediate punishment of the authors and perpetrators of the late massacre; that a period of thirty-six hours would be allowed for the purpose, at the expiration of which, if the required satisfaction was not given, he (Captain Pullen) would take the matter into his own hands, and would open fire upon the town. Four hours more were subsequently granted to make up for time lost in further communications with the Pasha's deputy. This official sent to say that no person about him understood any European language, and the purport of the letter had consequently to be explained to him. Meanwhile the Cyclops and the Lady Canning enforced a strict blockade of the port. The two vessels took up their stations at a point commanding the town, at a distance of little more

than a mile, and whence their guns could sweep the channels leading into the harbour.

No fresh communication of importance came from the shore, but the Lieutenant-Governor had the insolence to send a letter on board the Cyclops by the hand of a negro slave, the object of which was to solicit a longer delay; but the request was met by a prompt and decided refusal, and Captain Pullen further stated that, as the representative of the Queen of England, he would hold no further intercourse with the authorities on shore, excepting it were through the medium of an officer of proper rank, such as a "vakeel" or envoy.

Early in the morning of the 25th July, the forty hours, the time of grace allowed, had expired, and hostilities were forthwith commenced. The ships of war opened fire upon the town with shot and shell from their 68 and 32-pounders. When day broke, they were found to have had the effect of driving almost all the inhabitants to seek refuge outside the walls of the city. During the course of the day the boats of the Cyclops and Lady Canning were sent off with armed crews to destroy a number of buggalows, and other Arab native craft, and some fifteen were burnt or sunk. Almost all of these, though seemingly inoffensive trading vessels, were found fully armed, and with guns too heavy to be removed without a good deal of trouble. The bombardment was resumed at intervals early in the day, and was

continued in like manner on the 26th. Altogether between two and three hundred shot and shell, besides rockets, were thrown into Jeddah, and during the night-time the boats of the ships approached somewhat nearer the town, and despatched some more of these latter missiles on their fiery mission. It was afterwards ascertained that their appearance had struck intense terror into the minds of the people on shore. The women, as the fearful messengers of death and destruction came hurtling through the darkness of night, with a long train of fire in their wake, shrieked aloud, and even the men slunk away and hid themselves in mortal fear. The Moorsom shells we fired had also an excellent effect, and the town was a good deal damaged, though the actual loss of life was not very great. The forts during all the bombardment, though mounted with heavy guns, and with plenty of ammunition, never attempted to return our fire, and awaited with true oriental apathy while the Feringhees were working all this havoc on the town, which they were constructed to defend. We could not account for this silence, and had suspicions that they intended first to lull us into fancied security, and then attempt during the night to carry our ships by boarding, for we knew that there was a large body of troops stationed in the town, and it was not at all improbable that they might embark them in the boats and buggalows which lay close under the batteries, and try what could be done by a *coup de*

main. Sentries were accordingly posted round the decks, with strict orders to fire upon any craft which continued to advance after the first hail. One of the cutters was also lowered and employed as a guard-boat. No attempt, however, was made to molest us, and the night passed quietly. Captain Pullen, though obliged to punish the wretches who had treacherously, and in cold blood, murdered our countrymen, and though determined to teach these Arab savages that they could not massacre unoffending Christians with impunity, had previously declared his intention to spare all the public buildings and the property of the Turkish Government, and had requested that flags should be hoisted over them, which the authorities complied with.

On the afternoon of the 26th, a secretary of the Pasha arrived from Mecca, and implored Captain Pullen to desist from his work of destruction, declaring that the murderers, sixteen in number, were in confinement, that their punishment had been determined on, but that it could not be carried into execution until approval of the sentence was received from His Majesty the Sultan of Constantinople. Captain Pullen, however, continued firm in his previous ultimatum, and demanded the immediate decapitation of the culprits. On the following day (the 27th), some Albanian troops, to the number of about 600 men, arrived from Suez, and Captain Pullen was requested to allow them to land. This was at once granted, together with a fresh respite to

the town. During this interval, the Lieutenant-Governor—who, it was found, had been recently appointed, and was not the official who occupied the post at the time of the massacre—paid his first visit to the Cyclops, and announced to Captain Pullen the arrival from Mecca of Namick Pasha. The latter came off himself the next day, and now again in the Captain's state cabin the same arguments had to be listened to, with the same expostulations and entreaties for further delay, until the expected reply could be received from Constantinople; but all in vain,—Captain Pullen continued firm in his resolve not to give way one iota. He required the immediate punishment of the assassins, failing which he would obey his orders, even though the whole of the city should be laid in ashes and utterly demolished; while he declared that the responsibility of whatever might occur would rest upon the Pasha. As, however, the pilgrims had commenced returning from Mecca, and were pouring into Jeddah in crowds, a further respite was subsequently granted, and it was ultimately extended to the 5th August, so as to allow the unoffending religious votaries time to leave the place.

The Moorish Princes, who had also returned from Mecca, embarked on the 31st July on board the Lady Canning, and sailed for Yembo, from whence the Princes proposed proceeding to perform the pilgrimage to Medina. One of the three Princes had died of apoplexy at Mecca; it was ascertained

that cholera was raging in the city, and it was said the fatal epidemic had broken out in the ill-fated town of Jeddah. The latter place was filled with the wretched pilgrims, who, however, took advantage of the few days of grace granted them, and began crowding on board any craft available for carrying them away. In this operation of embarking every assistance was rendered by the boats of the ships of war, even to supplying the vessels with water from the condensing machines which the Cyclops carried. As we sailed from Jeddah with the Moorish Princes, I gathered what subsequently occurred from the officers of the steam frigate on their return to Aden, and also from the public prints.

Namick Pasha still continued to protest his inability to comply with the demands of the British officer, and it seemed as if nothing could save the town from impending destruction. But its fate was averted in a manner which no one at Jeddah could have hoped for. On the morning of the 2nd August, a steamer hove in sight of the town, which turned out to be a Turkish vessel, with Ismail Pasha and about 500 Egyptian troops on board. The object of Ismail Pasha's visit soon became known, and his arrival at once put an end to all further suspense or difficulty. Shortly after his arrival a letter came from Namick Pasha, stating that he had received an Imperial firman from the Sultan, conferring upon him the necessary powers; that he was consequently prepared to satisfy, to their fullest extent, the demands made

upon him, and that it only remained for Captain Pullen to point out the spot upon which the execution of the criminals should take place. Decapitation was the mode of death that had been decided upon : but I will spare my readers the details of the scene.

No doubt the town of Jeddah, and all that part of Arabia, received a lesson from the inflexible manner in which Captain Pullen stood by his original demands, and the terrible punishment he had already inflicted, in the amount of destruction to private property, and in the loss of life and limb; a lesson which I, for one, hope may not be required to be repeated on its fanatical inhabitants for a long time. At the time the bombardment created a deep and salutary impression on the minds of all the Mussulman populations; but these impressions, unfortunately, do not last long in that part of the world, and have, alas! always to be enforced by a repetition of arguments similar to those he employed.

For a third time I visited Jeddah, and under happier circumstances. I was attached to a sailing sloop-of-war of eighteen guns, called the Dacia, and on our entering the port nothing could exceed the obsequious courteousness of the authorities. A somewhat singular incident occurred while we were lying at anchor in the port the first night after our arrival. When the sun sank to rest that evening, the stifling heat of day was succeeded by a night, if possible, more

oppressive. Had not the thermometer stood at the not unusual figure, for the Red Sea, of 110°, we should all, doubtless, have had energy sufficient left in us, had we the inclination, to admire the surpassing softness and beauty of the short twilight, which can only be adequately portrayed in the words of the poet—

> "In the sky the stars are met,
> And on the wave is deeper blue,
> And on the leaf a browner hue,
> And in the heaven, that clear obscure,
> So softly dark, and darkly pure,
> Which follows the decline of day,
> As twilight melts beneath the moon away."

When the moon had risen, followed by the countless host of stars, the twilight again gave place to a night, to the brilliance of which not even the most glowing numbers of a Milton or a Byron could do justice. I shall, therefore, not betray my poverty of diction by attempting such a task. So still was the hour, for not a sound could be distinguished from the distant city, and all on board was wrapped in slumber, that as the sentry ceased from his short measured pacing at the gangway, and we who were on the watch stood by the starboard poop-ladder motionless and silent, so still was all nature, and every living thing above the water and under the water, that the vast expanse of ocean, gleaming under the bright light of the moon, looked like a sheet of glass or a sea of the dead. It seemed, too, that the sleeping town

itself, which lay within cannon-shot, was an hallucination of the mind, and as though the very existence of the teeming life beneath the decks on which I stood was a phantasy of the brain, while my silent companions were spectres. Thus, leaning with my elbows resting on the rail, and giving rein to a fanciful train of thought, I continued dreaming on, until my thoughts gradually returned to more practical subjects. By my side stood the quartermaster of the watch of which I was the officer in charge. I was now musingly regarding the midshipman on duty, who had descended the gangway ladder and was sitting on the bottom step, with his feet dipped into the almost lukewarm water; it was refreshing to dabble thus in the tide, after the torrid heat of the day. Poor boy, though only fifteen, his health was so broken that he ought never to have been sent away from his home, particularly to battle against the many privations and hardships of a nautical life. Physically, extremely delicate, and with a mental organization of a melancholy and painfully sensitive character, he could not have been more unfitted to excel in the naval profession, where the existence of such things as nerves and highly wrought feelings are utterly ignored. He had only been out some six months, and was already slowly dying of consumption, which had attacked him in its most malignant type. A I dreamily watched the bright coruscations of the phosphorus caused by the motion of the young middy's feet, I suddenly saw something like a train of fire rush from

the counter of the ship, while some object, dashing through the water with the rapidity of lightning, swept past the very spot where the boy's feet had been paddling in the water scarce one instant before. In fact, I thought Lancaster had not moved, but at the very point of time this strange apparition appeared (and for a moment the fiery comet-like object struck me as being some singular phenomenon), it seemed, from what young Lancaster afterwards told me, that he had withdrawn his feet from the water. The next minute it was patent to me what all this meant, and an expression of horror escaped both from the old quartermaster and myself as we saw a monstrous shark sailing quietly away from the ship. On pointing out the huge fish to the youngster he trembled violently, and turned pale with fear, but said he had no idea that it had made a dash at him; he gave the following as his reason for so abruptly and, as it turned out, so providentially retracing his steps up the ladder. He said that as he looked down into the black depths beneath him, the thought suddenly occurred to him how awful it must be to die at sea, and, with a 12lb shot at one's feet, to be dropped noiselessly into the fathomless obscurities of the ocean, there to lie on the rank sea-weeds which line the bed of the ocean; or, more horrid still, that the body which you cherished in life should, ere it is cold, be torn and gorged by monsters whose very forms are unknown to the human eye. At this thought, with a shudder and an unaccountably nervous

feeling, he hastily withdrew his feet from the water, never for one moment fancying how near he was experiencing in its most terrible shape the fate he dreaded. Poor Lancaster! within two months from that day he succumbed to the fatal disease which had attacked his vitals; and having died at sea, was committed to that boundless tomb which he feared so much in life.

Few of us have not personally known instances of the interposition of the Providence which watches over us, and, sometimes, at the most critical periods of our life's history, guides us in the course we ought to pursue. Those who have passed their days in scenes of danger can, I should say, almost without an exception, call to mind instances when, in times of imminent peril, such momentous interventions have preserved to them the life which nothing less than the might of a Supreme Power could have rescued from destruction.

Let me conclude this notice of "Jeddah in Peace and War," by an anecdote; and perhaps, also, some of my readers will not be displeased at the change from "grave to gay."

"In this connection," as our Yankee cousins would say, that is, speaking of our fate being sometimes influenced to our advantage by mysterious agencies, there is a strange story related of a gallant seaman, one of the naval heroes of the last century.

The late Admiral Sir H. Digby, when in command of a frigate, had shaped his course for Cape St. Vincent, and

was running to the southward in the latitude of Cape Finisterre. He rang his bell at eleven o'clock for the officer of the watch, and asked him, "How are we standing?"

"South-south-west, sir."

"What sort of weather?"

"The same, sir, as when you left the deck; fine strong breeze; starlight night."

"The same sail?"

"Yes, the same; double-reefed topsails and foresail."

"Has there been anybody in my cabin?"

"I believe not, sir; I will ask the sentry."

"Sentry," asked the officer of the watch, "has there been anybody in the captain's cabin?"

"No, sir," said the sentry, "nobody."

"Very odd," rejoined the captain; "I was perfectly convinced I had been spoken to!"

At two o'clock the bell was again rung, the same questions repeated, and the same answers given.

"Most extraordinary thing!" said Captain Digby; "every time I dropped asleep, 'Digby! Digby! go to the northward! Digby! Digby! go to the northward!' I seemed to hear spoken to me. I shall certainly do so. Take another reef in your topsails," he continued to the officer of the watch; "haul your wind, and tack every hour, till daylight, and then call me."

The officer of the middle watch did accordingly as he

was ordered, and when relieved at four o'clock, his successor was greatly astonished at finding the ship "on a wind," and asked the meaning of it. "Meaning, indeed!" said the other; "the captain has gone mad, that's all!" and then he told his story, at which they laughed heartily. There was, however, nothing to do but obey the order; and the ship was tacked at four, at five, at six, and at seven. She had just come round for the last time, as the day was breaking, when the look-out man cried out, "Large ship on the weather bow!" A musket was fired to bring her to, and she proved a Spanish vessel laden with dollars, and a rich cargo, which gave the fortunate dreamer a large portion of the great fortune which he amassed in the naval service. The story was told to Sir H. Robinson by the late Admiral Sir Jahleel Brenton; the high character of those officers, and of Sir H. Digby, forbidding the possibility of fabrication.

Gentle reader, I will not return from "lively to severe," knowing from experience that the frame of mind induced by the perusal of the former style of literature is more desirable than the impression left on the memory by a sad, though it may be, "ower true tale."

VI.

The Andaman Islands.

IN the Bay of Bengal, about 300 miles south of Rangoon, lies a group of islands, which doubtless will play a much more important part in the history of the world than that hitherto assigned to it. The Andaman Islands are situated between 10° and 15° North lat., and in 93° East long. They are forty miles distant from the nearest group of islands, called the Cocos, which lie to the northward, and are seventy-two miles distant from the Nicobar Islands to the south. The largest and most important of the group is that termed the Great Andaman, and about twenty miles to the southward is situated a second large island, considerably smaller than the other, and which is termed the Little Andaman.

The larger island is divided into three distinct tracts of land, separated by narrow passages; its northern section is some forty-four miles in length, with an average breadth of fourteen miles. In this part is situated the splendid land-

locked harbour, known as Port Cornwallis, and a few miles to the southward of it rises to the height of 2,400 feet the most considerable mountain peak in the whole group, known as Saddle Mountain. The centre division of the Great Andaman is known as the Middle Andaman, and is the largest of the three, being fifty miles in length, some fifteen miles long, with an average breadth the same as that of the northern division. In this portion there are two commodious harbours, bearing the names of Port Blair and Port Meadows, and on the western coast, also, are situated two harbours, known as Port Mouatt, after the distinguished medical officer who was chief of the Committee of Investigation, appointed by the British Government to report on the Andamans in 1857; and Port Campbell, so designated in honour of Captain Campbell of the Indian Navy, who commanded the Honourable Company's ship-of-war Semiramis, which conveyed the Committee to Burmah in that eventful year, and supplied the guard of seamen attached to it.

The strait separating the Southern from the Middle Andaman, unlike the passage in the north, is navigable in its entire length, and near its western extremity is an excellent harbour, discovered by Major Houghton, the officer who succeeded Dr. Walker, the first superintendent of the convict settlement. There is also a small island to the southward of the South Andaman, called Rutland Island. The whole

of the shores of the group is fringed with continuous coral reefs.

The inhabitants of these islands, known as Andamaners, or Mincopie, are a short, sturdy race of savages, having skins of an intense blackness, but they are not cannibals, as has been represented. Professor Owen, to whom an entire skeleton of a defunct Andamaner was sent, observes, regarding them, quoting from a report to the Government of India: "It is impossible to imagine any human beings to be lower in the scale of civilization than are the Andaman savages; entirely destitute of clothing, utterly ignorant of agriculture, living in the most primitive and rudest form of habitations, their only care seems to be the supply of their daily food."

Their chief weapons are bows and arrows, and some of the males carry spears, the iron heads for which weapons are obtained from wrecks. The Andamaners are very powerful, though diminutive in size, and are swift runners, and can climb like monkeys, ascending in search of honey the straight lofty trees without branches. They are also excellent swimmers from their childhood, and wonderful divers. Three or four of them have been seen to dive into deep water, and bring up in their arms a fish six or seven feet long; and they make a practice of fishing for shell fish in deep water, at great depths in the sea, and can shoot fish with arrows when a European cannot see them. They spin rope, make

wicker-work baskets, and large nets for catching turtle; and they scoop out their canoes from fallen trees by means of a small kind of adze, tipped with a semicircular blade of iron. But these are the only acquirements that raise these savages above the brute creation, and their low stature and black colour increase the similarity to the ourang-outang, or gorilla; but they are, on the other hand, well-shaped. The stature of the full grown male sent to Professor Owen, and which is, I believe, now to be seen in the British Museum, is four feet ten inches, which is about the average height.

By old writers they are very generally called Negrillos, or dwarf negroes, and it is said, though there is no foundation for the statement, that they are descended from African negroes, imported by the Portuguese, and wrecked on these islands. The Andaman islanders manufacture various articles and implements, but they are of very simple construction.

Their canoes, as described by Dr. Mouatt, are of a peculiar character. The natives first select one of the tallest, straightest, and thickest trees, and then set to work with infinite patience to bring to the earth this king of the forest. As their tools are of the most primitive description, it takes a considerable time to fell and hollow out the mighty trunk, and it is surprising how they ever succeed in reducing the shapeless mass to the condition of a canoe, hollowed out and completed with consummate neatness and finish. The shell is no thicker than a lady's deal bonnet-box, and yet,

though extremely light, they are found to be strong enough to keep the sea in very rough weather. These boats are fitted with outriggers, similar to those in use among the Cingalese fishermen, and which renders them incapable of being upset. It is supposed that these outriggers must have been adapted from one of the Point de Galle fishing-boats having been driven to the eastward and wrecked on their shores, for, in speaking of these islands, early writers never refer to their existence. The Andamaners proceed to sea on fishing expeditions, often as far as forty or fifty miles. The paddles used to propel these boats are also specimens of fine workmanship; they are made of sizes varying from three to four feet in length, and are generally the handiwork of the women and children. During some trials of speed between the Mincopie canoes and the cutters and captain's gig of the Honourable Company's steam frigate Semiramis, while that ship was at the Andamans in 1858, the islanders, when seeking to escape, invariably beat picked crews of the man-of-war's men, much to the chagrin of the latter.

The first credible account we have of these islands having been personally visited by others than the natives is taken from Pemberton's collection of voyages and travels. In the ninth century two Mohammedan travellers visited the group while travelling over a great part of China and Asia, and their description of the inhabitants and of their customs is so grotesquely exaggerated, that it is extremely doubtful

whether they even saw what they pretended to describe. The next account we have of them is of the time when Aurungzebe was Emperor of the Moguls, in the latter years of the seventeenth century. Again, in Hamilton's account of the East Indies, reference is made to a ship that was wrecked on these islands, when it was supposed the crew were devoured by the islanders; but we must come down to more recent times before we can be certain of learning reliable information regarding the Andamans and their inhabitants.

In the latter part of the last century the Indian Government despatched Lieutenant Archibald Blair, of the Indian Navy, and Colonel Colebrooke, of the Bengal Army, to survey this island, and from the report of these two very able and distinguished officers most of the present information is derived. The official Report of Lieutenant Blair, one of the early hydrographers of a service that subsequently produced such surveyors as Moresby and Haines, was, in June, 1789, laid before the Marquis Cornwallis, the then Governor-General of India. Speaking of this report, Dr. Mouatt says, "It not only contained a minute and accurate account of the survey conducted under the superintendence of that able and enterprising officer, but it was also illustrated by a chart, in which the situation of the most important localities was distinctly marked, accompanied with a plan of three harbours, which he had found to be secure places of refuge for the shipping that stress of weather or other causes might drive

on the Andaman coasts. The report merited and obtained much praise for the clearness with which it was written, and the intelligible manner in which various operations of the surveying party were described. The chief geographical features of the island were delineated with a fidelity that has secured the approbation of subsequent explorers."

Captain Blair also speaks in his report of those curious swallows' nests of which we have all heard from our childhood, as forming one of the greatest luxuries of a Chinese mandarin's repast. Writing of one of the caves containing these nests, which he explored, he says: "The principal cave is situated at the south point of Strait Island (in Diligent Strait), which is rocky, but not exceeding forty feet in height. The entrance, which is washed by the tide, is an irregular aperture of about six feet wide, and the same height. On advancing thirty or forty feet, the height diminishes to four feet, and the breadth increases to twenty. Here it is rather dark, and very warm, and the top and sides of the cave are covered with nests; an astonishing number of birds twittering and on the wing whisking past the ears and eyes. This, contrasting with the melancholy noise of the waves resounding through the gloomy tavern, formed a very uncommon and interesting scene. The birds are probably induced to choose this situation from the caves being inaccessible either to snakes or quadrupeds, and probably defensible against birds of prey. The nests, in general, are in form the quarter of

a sphere of two and a half inches diameter, one of the sections being firmly fixed to the rock, the other section leaves the nest open above. The substance is glutinous, those most in estimation are white and semi-transparent. It has been doubted, and various conjectures have been formed, of what the nests are composed. In smaller and more accessible caves I have observed a mucilage exuding from the rock, moistened by exhalations from the sea, which washes the lower part of these caves. This mucilage, on being dried, had both the texture, colour, and taste of the nest; and what removed all my doubts of this being the substance, was seeing the birds, in immense number, resorting to a cave very productive of the mucilage in the month of January, which is the season in which the birds build their nests. It may be presumed that the nests are neither animal nor vegetable, but of a mineral substance."

Colonel Colebrooke's report was equally valuable, and contained a vocabulary of the Andaman language, which, however, Dr. Mouatt, in his intercourse with the natives, found of little service, probably owing to defective pronunciation.

So favourable were the reports of these officers, that the Indian Government decided on establishing a penal settlement, and accordingly a colony, under the charge of Lieutenant Blair, was organized on a site then known as Port Cornwallis, near the southern extremity of the great Andaman.

The name of Port Cornwallis was subsequently changed to Old Harbour, and again to Port Blair, in honour of its surveyor, by which it is at present known. The spot chosen for the first colony in Port Cornwallis was Mark Island, now called Chatham Island, which was likewise proposed by the Expedition of 1857 as the best site for the penal settlement. Captain Blair had taken with him a large staff of artificers from Bengal, as also provisions for six months. His first act was to raise a redoubt, on which he mounted the guns of his ship, the Ranger; and then the colonists, under the superintendence of their able chief, turned their attention to clearing away the rank vegetation. While doing so they were frequently engaged in conflict with the natives, who came over from the mainland in considerable numbers, and greatly harassed the working parties by the insidious method of attack they adopted. A convenient watering-place for ships was however at length cleared, and a reservoir constructed; sheds were also erected within the redoubt, and the settlers were fully employed in the cultivation of land, which soon began to recompense their labour. On the 19th December of the same year, Commodore Cornwallis, brother of the Governor-General, with H.M.'s ships Ariel and Perseverance, arrived at the settlement, and the Commodore in his report to Government stated that he found it "fully equal to what it had been represented."

During the three years the penal settlement was established

here, Captain Blair occupied his time in completing his surveys, and sailed round the island, when he discovered another larger and more commodious harbour, about 2° to the northward and on the eastern shore of the same island, in 43° 28′ North lat., and 93° 12′ East long. To this place, also called Port Cornwallis, the colony was removed in 1792, and in March of the following year Captain Blair was succeeded in command of the settlement by Major Kyd of the Engineers. In consequence of the war with France, the Colony was put into a state of defence, and large reinforcements were sent, and more guns mounted on the redoubt, to guard against an apprehended attack from the enemy.

On the 14th May, 1794, the council of the Governor-General reported that the situation of Port Cornwallis was unfavourable to the health of the settlers, and in the following year fifty deaths occurred among the native convicts during the rainy season. In February, 1796, accordingly, we find that orders were issued by the Indian Government for the abandonment of this settlement, and the removal of all the settlers to Prince of Wales' island, as being a more healthy locality.

Major Kyd, in his report on the climate of Port Cornwallis, says that only four months of fair weather can be counted upon, viz., December, January, February, March, though part of the months of April and November may be added to this estimate. During this period the weather is dry and

the air clear and pure. Towards the end of March and throughout April the thermometer is seldom below 83° in the shade during the day, and sometimes ranges as high as 98°. From the middle of May till November it continues to rain with little intermission. The country about Port Cornwallis is described as covered with lofty trees and thick underwood, the former affording most excellent timber for ship-building purposes. The soil also is excellent; the scenery here, as elsewhere in the group, magnificent; and the foliage of the rich luxuriance proverbial in the East.

In the year 1795 Colonel Syme, while on his way to Ava, visited Port Cornwallis, and devoted a chapter to it in his work on the results of the Mission to Ava. He describes Chatham Island, in which were erected the houses of the Commandant, and of the penal colony which at that time numbered, including guards, some 700 souls. After its abandonment we hear nothing further of Port Cornwallis until the year 1824, when the fleet that conveyed Sir Archibald Campbell and his army to Burmah rendezvoused here. The expedition consisted of about 11,000 European and native troops, and the immense fleet of transports that conveyed them was convoyed by three vessels of war under Commodore Grant, and by the Diana, a little steamer recently built in Calcutta, and the first that ever floated in the waters of the east. What astonishment must have been created in the minds of the simple islanders by the sight of this immense armament,

and the singular vessel that formed a portion of it! Major Snod. grass, in his history of the war, briefly notices Port Cornwallis-

In the year 1840 Dr. Helfer, a Russian savant, in the employ of the Indian Government, visited the Andamans for scientific purposes, and while carrying on some observations on shore was transfixed by a spear hurled by a savage concealed behind a bush. Madame Helfer, who accompanied her husband, immediately drew a pistol she carried in her girdle, and with a presence of mind worthy the niece of Field-Marshal Von Bulow, shot the murderer on the spot.

At length reports of the outrages continually committed on shipwrecked mariners induced the Government of India to order a committee to proceed to the Andaman Islands, and report upon them with reference to the establishment of a penal settlement for the mutinous Sepoys of the Bengal Army, and for native convicts from other parts of British India. The committee appointed were in every way suited for their duties, and consisted of Dr. Mouatt of the Bengal Medical Staff, with Surgeon Playfair, and Lieutenant Heathcote of the Indian Navy. The first-named officer was selected to take general charge of the expedition, while to Dr. Playfair was entrusted the medical and scientific, and to Lieutenant Heathcote the hydrographical duties of the committee. In November, 1857, they sailed for Moulmein, on board the Honourable Company's steam frigate Semiramis, commanded by Captain Campbell of the Indian

Navy. Here the Pluto, an iron war steamer of light draught, was placed at their disposal; she was admirably adapted for navigating the shallow water, and the coral reefs of the group of islands the Committee were about to visit. On the 9th December they sailed for their destination, having first been supplied with all appliances necessary for the proper attainment of the objects in view, as well as with a guard of twenty well-trained seamen, who had been carefully selected by Captain Campbell from amongst the crew of the Semiramis. Colonel Fytche, the commissioner, also made over to the Committee twelve Burmese convicts used to forest life, with a native guard, for the purpose of cutting a path through the jungle, or for boring for water while on surveying expeditions, for which they were supplied with a boring rod.

The Pluto arrived at Chatham Island on the 11th, and then was commenced the series of observations which are embodied in a combined Report submitted to the Governor-General, and which was published, in 1859, as the twenty-fifth number of the "Selections from the Records of the Government of India." Dr. Mouatt has published, in addition, an exhaustive work on these interesting islands, and also submitted a paper to the Royal Geographical Society, which was read at the meeting of that learned body on the 13th January, 1862, and from which works I have drawn much of my materials.

The Committee encountered great difficulty in making their observations, owing to the vegetation all over the islands, which was of so dense a character that they could not have accomplished anything, had it not been for the material aid rendered by the twelve convicts and the crew of the Pluto, in clearing away the jungle from their path. There were also no open spaces for camping, and as the exploring parties were unprovided with tents they had to return on board before sunset, which perhaps would have been necessary under any circumstances, for the tameless savages with whom they had to deal were so crafty and stealthy in their movements, that they never knew of the proximity of an enemy until a shower of deadly barbed arrows apprised them of their presence.

Dr. Mouatt used every means to cultivate more friendly relations with these singular people, but all his efforts ended in failure; they would accept any food or cheap finery left for them in conspicuous places, but the only return ever made was the most implacable hostility to the intruders, and they never lost an opportunity of striving to take away the life of any one who attempted to approach them.

On the last day of 1857, two of the boats' crews of the Pluto with the three members of the Committee proceeded on shore at Interview Island in the Middle Strait, between the South and Middle Andaman, and unfortunately came into collision with the natives. The latter attacked

them from their canoes, discharging flights of arrows into the two cutters. All the officers and sailors were armed, and though Dr. Mouatt had given strict instructions before starting that every forbearance was to be shown to the Mincopie, even his philanthropy was not proof against this great provocation. Lieutenant Heathcote was severely wounded in the thigh, which was transfixed by an arrow from the bow of a native chief, a sailor was dangerously wounded in the back, and another man's hand was pinned to the boat's side. Such were the results of the combat on our side. The casualty roll of the savages was more heavy. Three of them were killed and fell overboard, one of them being the chief aforesaid, who, according to Dr. Mouatt's account, fell like a sable Cæsar; covering his face with his hands (he boasted not the "*toga virilis*," for ne'er a rag draped his manly limbs), he sank into "his own canoe," and paddled himself (metaphorically) across the gloomy Styx into the Elysian fields where all good Mincopies go.

The rest of the natives incontinently skedaddled into the woods and were seen no more, with the exception of one man, who was wounded, and was carried captive to Calcutta. After being invested in the habiliments of civilization and receiving every care and attention, this individual fell ill, so to restore his health he was taken back to his "ain countrie" by direction of Lord Canning, and landed at the very spot where he had been captured.

One of the best sources of the information we now possess of the Andamaner, "as he is at home," is, singularly enough, a Sepoy of the 14th Regiment of Bengal Native Infantry, which mutinied at Sealkote in the Punjaub. Doodnath Fewarny, having been despatched to the island with other convicts, escaped from confinement on the 23rd of April, 1858, and, joining the natives, lived with them until the 17th of May in the following year, when he voluntarily gave himself up. Dr. J. P. Walker was at the time superintendent of Port Blair, and the Sepoy, in his deposition before that officer, stated that "the aborigines are undoubtedly uncivilized, but they most certainly are not cannibals in any way, for they neither devour human bodies, nor do they eat uncooked animal food in any form. They are a wild people, most savagely inclined to strangers generally, but most kindly disposed in their conduct to each other." This statement regarding cannibalism among the natives of the Andamans, though it upsets all preconceived notions, has been verified by the researches of the members of the committee, who, though they frequently found the bones and remains of the wild hog strewed about the deserted camp-fires of the natives, yet never saw anything resembling human remains.

The entire population is migratory, and generally select the jungle adjoining the sea-coast, from the facilities that there exist for procuring an abundant supply of fish. Villages are also formed near tidal creeks; but the Sepoy

stated that there were no habitations or clearings in the interior, and except to hunt pigs or gather fruit, or while moving from one point to another, parties never remain away from the sea-coast after sunset. Our deponent placed the population at considerably above 50,000, which greatly exceeds the estimates made by previous explorers.

"Their habitations," he said, "are open huts, composed of roofs thatched with palm leaves, raised on four posts, of which those in front are usually higher than those in the rear. In every village or encampment was one central hut, built and thatched with great care and skill, square in form, and containing a large number of pig and turtle skulls, bows, arrows, shields, and domestic articles. The floors of the huts are free from vegetation, and the ground in and immediately adjoining the villages is also carefully cleared of all jungle." The footpaths around encampments, when carefully traced, were found to lead to rills of fresh water, but in no instance did they lead to more extended inland means of communication. The huts in each group varied from three or four to as many as twenty-two in number. In the interior of the huts were found bundles of pig and turtle skulls, and sometimes a considerable collection of fish bones. The people do not believe in the existence of a supreme Being, and perform no religious ceremony of any sort.

Doodnath Fewarny, who witnessed five weddings, gave some interesting particulars regarding the form of marriage,

which is of a very primitive description. Like some Belgravian mammas and papas, the seniors determine matters without reference to the principals in the affair, who are merely informed that everything is arranged. "The bride having painted her body in stripes, and covered a finger with red earth, moistened with turtle oil, sits in leaves spread on the ground as a carpet; the bridegroom, similarly decorated, squats in his leafy bed at a distance of ten or twelve paces. They thus sit in silence for about an hour, after which, the person who is about to unite them comes from his hut, takes the bridegroom by the hand, leads him to the bride, and having seated him without saying a single word, presents him with five or six iron-headed arrows, and then leaves him. They remain in silence by each other till nightfall, and this is all the ceremonial observed."

Children are taught to respect their parents, and render them implicit obedience, and, on the other hand, the latter are tender to their offspring, while infanticide is unknown among them. The boys, at three years old, are taught to shoot with miniature bows and arrows, and when eight years of age they accompany their fathers in their hunting and fishing excursions.

To the women is apportioned, as usual among savages, most of the hard household duties, such as supplying water and wood, and cooking the food; singularly enough also the women are the barbers of the settlement, and display

considerable skill in the execution of this duty. The razors they employ are simply pieces of shell or chips of bottle glass they may happen to pick up; these they sharpen to a fine edge, and though the article may be no longer than a bean, they manage with great expertness to remove all hair from the body. They also tattoo both sexes by making small incisions in regular lines over the whole of the body, with the exception of the head, neck, lower part of the abdomen, and hands and feet. The operation is performed between the ages of eight and ten, and extends over a period of two or three years, for only a limb or part of a limb is tattooed at a time, and that only during the first four months of the year, when fruit is abundant. As soon as the incisions are completed the wounded limb, which suppurates freely for two or three weeks, is smeared over with a white earth, but no colouring matter is employed.

It seems also that the ladies are the doctors, though the art of surgery does not appear to extend beyond the operation of blood letting by scarification, while the pharmacopæia seems limited to a red earth paste and turtle oil. It is their duty on the march to carry the empty water-vessels—hollow bamboos, with the division, or septa, removed—also the nautilus shells used as drinking cups, and the spare or uncooked provisions. On coming to a halt, it is likewise the duty of the women to pluck the green leaves for their bedding, and to build as well as thatch any huts that may

be needed. Of course they carry the young children, who are fastened in a sling made of bark, and suspended from the neck, while the legs of the child pass over the mother's hips. From this sketch of their duty it will be seen that the gentle sex have rather a hard time of it in the Andamans.

The great drawback to the enjoyment of life, in the eyes of the Mincopie, consists in the existence of mosquitoes, which swarm everywhere, and are a plague by day and by night. To keep off the insidious and persevering attack of these insects the Andamaner smears himself all over with a thick coat of yellow earth, in which, as a sole covering, he lays himself down to rest.

The Pluto, with the members of the Committee on board, first examined the east coast of the Great Andaman, from Port Cornwallis in the north to Rutland Island in the extreme south, which was also explored. They then proceeded along the west coast as far as the North Reef Island, incidentally paying a visit to the Andaman Strait between the North and Middle islands, and the Middle Strait between the South and Middle islands.

In their report to the Government they spoke in the highest terms of the picturesque magnificence and great security of the harbour of Port Cornwallis, the one occupied as a settlement in 1792, and abandoned in 1796 owing to its unhealthiness, which the Committee ascribed to an extensive bay of mud, skirted by belts of mangroves on the

south-western extremity of Chatham Island. The remains of the old settlement were disentangled from the dense brushwood, and the fragments of brickwork were found in good preservation. The original settlement, now known as Port Blair, was considered by Dr. Mouatt as the only desirable spot on which to establish the convict colony contemplated by the Government, and thither accordingly were removed some of the Bengal mutineers under the charge of Dr. Walker, who was well known in India for his intimate knowledge of native character, and who established his head-quarters at Ross Island, in the harbour of Port Blair. This island, as also Chatham Island, and several bays, were cleared by the convicts; vegetables of different sorts were planted and appeared to thrive. Paddy was also cultivated with good prospects of success, and wheat was sown. About 2,000 convicts in all had arrived towards the end of 1858. They were allowed to engage in their respective callings, and those who had not any were allowed two annas a day, and were employed as labourers clearing jungle and making roads.

The records of the settlement do not, however, show an unqualified success in the management of the convicts committed to the Doctor's custody, for whereas between the 10th of March and the 12th of June, 1858, 773 felons were landed at Port Blair, only 481 of them remained in the colony on the 16th of June, 1859. Statistics show that

of the original number sixty-four died in hospital, one hundred and forty effected their escape, one committed suicide, and eighty-seven were executed.

Early in 1859, a few days after the steamer had left for Calcutta, the Superintendent, while sitting in his office, was attacked, about two p.m., by a large body of Punjaubee convicts, who had formed a plan for murdering the Europeans, seizing the barracks occupied by the guard, then the Charlotte, an armed schooner of the Indian Navy, stationed off the island, and lastly, proposed to capture the Sesostris, a large paddle steamer of the Bengal Marine. The mutineers, 150 in number, overpowered the European sentry, wounding him in four places; one among them seized the musket and aimed, from the office steps, at the Superintendent, who was sitting writing, with a loaded revolver on the table by his side. Before the Punjaubee had time to fire, the overseer of the establishment, a native of Agra, with great presence of mind, rushed on the man and knocked him down. He saved the Superintendent's life, but almost at the expense of his own, for a convict coming up at the moment, aimed a blow at his head with an axe; fortunately it only laid his shoulder open, while another who had seized the musket bayonetted him in the hand. This unexpected check enabled the Superintendent to act, and the main guard at the same time turning out, the mutiny was speedily put down. The convicts employed as "chuprassees" about

the office, all old Sepoys, behaved exceedingly well, throwing themselves without fear on the armed convicts and overpowering them.

Dr. Walker resigned his appointment during the year 1859, and Major Haughton was appointed Superintendent. After a successful governorship, he was succeeded by Lieutenant-Colonel Tyler, but was reinstated King of the Andamans in 1863, with an increased salary of 1,750 rupees a month. More recently, the savages inhabiting these interesting islands have afforded a painful illustration of that relentless cruelty to all foreigners who fall into their hands, which would almost induce one to think that it was an article of their faith, had there been religion of any sort among them.

During the year 1867, the captain and seven of the crew of a merchant ship called the Assam Valley, when landing on one of the islands, were made prisoners by the savages. An expedition, consisting of six or eight marines, and twenty men of H.M. 24th Regiment under Lieutenant Much, and accompanied by Assistant-Surgeon Douglas of the same corps, embarked in the screw steamer Arracan, for the purpose of setting at rest all doubts regarding the fate of the unhappy seamen. They proceeded to the little Andaman Island, the scene of the supposed outrage, and having effected a landing at a spot where they saw the remains of a sailor's dress, were assailed by showers of arrows, and in self-defence as well as afterwards in revenge, opened fire upon the

savages, and killed between twenty and thirty of them. They found a curved line of eight graves of the crew who had been murdered, the head of one man touching the feet of another, and the face of each just visible above the surface of the ground. In the meantime, one of the boats used by the soldiers had been smashed by the surf, and the other was without a rudder, so the party made a raft in order to return to the steamer, but were washed off by almost every wave, and one officer, Lieutenant Glasford, who joined the expedition as a volunteer, was drowned. Dr. Douglas showed great courage in rescuing some of the drowning men, and for his gallantry on this occasion was subsequently awarded the Victoria Cross.

On the 10th of September in the same year, a brig called the Nineveh left Negapatam for Rangoon with eighty-six native emigrants, and a crew of twenty hands, and experienced such violent weather that on the night of the 16th she became unmanageable, and drifted on a reef on one of the Andamans. Finding no hope of getting the vessel off, the crew and passengers went on shore, where they remained two days unmolested, and without seeing any one. On the third day, while the boat had gone off to the ship for provisions, the party were suddenly surprised by a large number of savages, who commenced an attack on them with bows and arrows; upon this some took to the sea, the Nacodah and nine men succeeded in getting off in

the ship's boat which had returned, and some took to the jungle, while others made a raft and put to sea. The party in the boat was picked up by a Coringa brig, which took them to Moulmein.

Acting upon information given by the Nacodah to the Master-Attendant, Major Nelson Davies, the Secretary to the Chief Commissioner, with praiseworthy promptitude, chartered the steamer Defiance, which proceeded to Port Blair, and, ultimately, with the assistance of another vessel, rescued the greater number of the unfortunate castaways.

An Indian journal has called attention to a report recently issued on the vegetation of the Andaman Islands, in which Mr. Kurz, the curator of the Herbarium of the Calcutta Botanical Gardens, gives it as his opinion that the Andaman Islands are in a sinking state, and must eventually disappear. Mr. Kurz has arrived at this conclusion from having observed, at various points of the islands, a vast extent of decaying vegetation, stumps of trees, etc., covered by or open to the action of the sea. There are at the present time upwards of 6,000 convicts located at the penal settlements on the Andamans; but there is no occasion for immediate anxiety on their behalf, for, according to Mr. Kurz, the submersion is proceeding only at the rate of one foot in 100 years, and it will take 1,000 years before all the stores and houses along the beach at Ross Island disappear under water.

All these constantly recurring outrages seem to point to the necessity of occupying the Andaman Islands in sufficient force, to cause the natives to regard foreigners in some other light than as human beings who must be destroyed whenever encountered, for it is intolerable that on the great highway of our trade with the East, a race of unreasoning and murdering savages should be permitted to exist, and to prey upon the property of our merchants and the lives of our seamen with impunity. A few thousand native convicts could clear away the jungle gradually, thereby making roads for the soldiers, who ought to march with the olive branch of peace and amity in one hand, and the rifle in the other. In the almost certain event of any peaceful advance on our part being met with hostility, then ought the breech-loader to be brought into requisition against the Mincopie bow and arrow. The alternative should be abstention from further outrage against shipwrecked mariners, or extermination. Any one who has marked in the pages of the world's history how extinction has overtaken aboriginal races in every instance in which they have come into collision with the superior civilization of the white man, will perceive that the fate of the aboriginal Australian and Tasmanian—to go no further back than the present generation—must overtake the brutalized savage, who seems the "missing link" between the genus homo and the gorilla, and who now inhabits the Andaman Islands.

VII.

The Island of Ormus and Bunder Abbas.

IN passing through the Straits of Ormuz into the Persian Gulf the voyager enters into an inland sea that laves the shores of countries that from time immemorial have been the favourite theme of romancers. The countries of the East teem with poetic associations, but the lands of Persia and Arabia are, *par excellence*, the favoured abodes of the muses. To any one who has by actual travel acquired any acquaintanceship with the nations inhabiting these countries, how grossly untrue do the statements of these "lying romancers" turn out!

The Arabs are a race in whom are combined, in due proportion, the vices of lying and cheating, while they are also treacherous friends, and cruel enemies. As to their persons, they are filthy in their habits, possessing not the most distant regard to personal cleanliness, while their profligacy is as gross as the Turks, or their neighbours the Persians; they have, in short, but the one redeeming feature of

high animal courage. It was the custom to assert that the Arabs inhabiting the interior of the country were free from the vices of their countrymen on the sea coast, who it was considered had been contaminated by association with other nationalities, but Mr. Palgrave stripped off the cloak that thus charitably hid the multitude of sins concealed beneath the Bedouin toga. This gentleman journeyed through Central Arabia, and in the disguise of a doctor sojourned some time at Riad, the capital of Nejed, and therefore his views regarding the Arab character carry peculiar weight, much more so than that of travellers who have only visited seaport towns, where it is obvious the natives must have been influenced, whether for better or worse, by the European civilization with which they have been brought into contact.

Mr. Palgrave's opinion is by no means flattering, and though doing justice to what they might be, he says, "what better, in fact, can be expected of men whose whole lives are passed in driving camels about open wastes, without law, without instruction, without example? And instead of all these, amid extreme unceasing privations, frequent danger, and security never. It is the education of a savage, and that such a school should send out such pupils is perfectly natural.

"I only wish that those who indulge their imagination in ideal portraits of desert life, and conceive the Bedouins

and their condition to be worthy of admiration or of envy, would pass but three days in a Sherarat encampment, and see not through the medium of romancing narratives, written *a priori*, as they say, for ready currency, but with their own eyes, to what a depth of degradation one of the noblest races earth affords can descend under the secular influence of nomade life."

The first place of interest as you pass between Ras Mussendom and the Persian coast, skirting the small rocky islet of Larej, is the island of Hormuz or Ormuz, so called from the kingdom of Hormuz or Hormuzeia on the mainland, and immortalized by Milton in those lines in "Paradise Lost":—

> "High on a throne of royal state, which far
> Outshone the wealth of Ormuz or of Ind,
> Or where the gorgeous East, with richest hand,
> Showers on her kings barbaric pearl and gold."

In it also is laid the scene of Moore's beautiful poem, the "Fireworshippers." The island possesses also other claims of a more solid character to render it famous, for Ormuz was noted as a Portuguese settlement before the English East India Company gained a footing in India; and here the great discoverer William Baffin met his death.

Before entering into the details of its history, I will say a few words as to the cape facing it, called Ras Mussendom, and its attendant dangers. It has not been unusual to confuse Mussendom with Selamah, a rock rising sheer and gaunt

out of the water; the former, which is the headland proper, derives its name from the Arabic word for "anvil," while Selamah means "safety," though its precipitous crags rather play the part of Charybdis to Mussendom, the Arabic Scylla. There is also another passage between Ras Mussendom itself and the scowling rocks which jut out beyond the promontory, and through which the writer has passed; the way is very narrow, and dark as the caverns of Erebus, while the lofty cliffs tower above you on either hand, and seem as if about to precipitate themselves on the venturesome seamen who dare to thread the watery gorge at their feet. To return to Ormuz.

If the abomination of desolation is to be found anywhere, it certainly is apparent in this once world-renowned island. On the north-east coast can still be seen the Portuguese fort, and though nearly three hundred years have passed since the palmy days of the glory of Ormuz, the fortifications still attest the skill of the military engineers who constructed them, and the genuineness of the mason's handiwork.

The fort stands on a projecting point of land, separated from the island by a moat, and may be considered almost impregnable. A few useless guns, bearing date the early part of the 18th century, lay about the bastions during Col. Pelly's visit in 1863. "Three sides of the fort," he says, "are washed by the sea, and the side facing inward is strengthened by a wet ditch, cut entirely through the narrow

neck of land on which the place is built. It seems that during the occupation of the Portuguese, a small inlet of the sea on the eastern side of the fort had sufficient depth of water for vessels of considerable tonnage to be immediately under the wharves. This inlet is now, however, filled up." Ormuz once possessed 4,000 houses and boasted a population of 40,000 souls, but that was in the days when the Portuguese were supreme in the Persian Gulf. Conscious that their strength lay in their ships, and that therefore they could defend this island against all attack, they here founded their chief settlement, and through this port flowed all the trade from Bussorah, and the populous towns of the Persian Gulf. Ormuz, while in possession of the Portuguese between 1507 and 1622, rose to great wealth and importance as the emporium of this vast trade, though there can be no doubt that its prosperity and greatness were much overrated by old writers. As has been remarked, the statement of Justamond that water was hawked about the streets on camels for the convenience of passengers, shows not that the town enjoyed an additional luxury, but that a necessary of life, which is elsewhere freely used, possessed a market value in this utterly desolate island. It is almost impossible to form a decided opinion regarding the extent of Ormuz in the time of its pristine greatness, but some idea may be gained from the fact, that a perpendicular line from the fort ditch to the hills in the rear of the ruins measures about a mile and a half,

while two towers, still standing, at either extremity of the base immediately above the beach, and marking the limits of the town, may be about two miles apart. The western of these towers still bears the name of Urgazee, and the eastern that of Meshshateh. Outside the latter and stretching south-eastward seem to have been suburbs parallel with the sea-shore, and leading down to a pier, distant three or four miles, and which bears the name of Trompuk. As you survey the barren rock with its handful of inhabitants, now certainly not more than 300 in number, you can with difficulty credit the statement as to its population and trade having been as considerable as stated. The island is about fifteen miles in circumference, and is of volcanic formation; owing to the heavy rains which occasionally deluge its surface, the soil is washed away, presenting a remarkable reddish appearance. Ormuz is an appanage of the Imaum of Muscat, and that potentate retains a governor and a small garrison to levy tribute on the salt collected there, a commodity which now forms the sole trade of the island. Near the fort is a structure used by the Portuguese as a Pharos, which is commonly supposed to have originally been a minaret. The harbour consists of two bays separated by the promontory, in which stood the fort.

Of the numerous settlements the great Alphonso de Albuquerque founded on the coast of Persia, Ormuz was the first. That great soldier, in his choice of an entrepôt

for the commerce of his country, and still more, of a central military station, did not evince the good judgment that was so conspicuously apparent in those great commanders of antiquity who founded cities, that, however often they have since changed hands, will ever be regarded as monuments of the far-seeing genius of the originator. Its hills and plains are formed of salt, and that mineral is not only impregnated in its streams, but crusts over them like frozen snow. The nature of the soil, or rather of the surface of the earth, renders the heat of summer more intolerable at Ormuz than in any of those parched islands, or provinces, with which it is surrounded; and unless we consider the advantages which it derives from its excellent harbour or local situation, it appears to be one of the last spots of the globe which human beings would desire to inhabit.

The first settlers on this island were some Arabs, who were compelled by the Tartar invaders of Persia to leave the continent. These gave it the name of Hormuz or Ormuz, being that of the district which they had been obliged to abandon. One old fisherman, whose name was Gerun, is said to have been its sole occupant when this colony arrived. They remained masters of Ormuz till conquered, as we have said, by Albuquerque, and it remained in possession of the Portuguese for more than a century.

It became during that period the emporium of all the commerce of the Gulf; merchants from every quarter

of the globe had flocked to a city where their property and persons were secure against injustice or oppression, and from whence they could carry on a profitable commerce with Persia, Arabia, and Turkey, without being exposed to the dangers attendant on a residence in these barbarous and unsettled countries.

Shah Abbas, the King of Persia, saw with envy the prosperity of Ormuz; he could not understand the source from which it was derived, and looked to its conquest as an event that would add both to the glory and the wealth of his country.

Emaun Kooli Khan, Governor of Fars, received orders to undertake this great enterprise, but the King was well aware that it would be impossible to succeed without the aid of a naval equipment. The English were ready auxiliaries; an agreement, which exempted them from paying customs on the merchandise then imported into Gombroon, and gave them a share of the duties taken from others, added to boundless promises of future favour, were the bribes by which the agents of the East India Company were induced to become the instruments of destroying this noble settlement. A fleet was soon collected; Persian troops were embarked, and the attack made. The Portuguese defended themselves bravely, but worn out by hunger and fatigue, and altogether hopeless of succour, they were at length compelled to surrender. The city was given over to the Persians, by whom it was soon stript of all that was valuable, and left to a natural

decay. Shah Abbas was overjoyed at the conquest, but all the magnificent plans which he had formed for having a great seaport in his dominions terminated in his giving his own name to Gombroon, which he commanded to be in future called Bunder Abbas, or the Port of Abbas. This siege took place in the year 1622, and it was while fighting on board one of the ships that the Arctic explorer William Baffin received his death wound.

The hopes which the servants of the East India Company had cherished from the expulsion of the Portuguese from Ormuz, and their other possessions, were completely disappointed. The treaty which Abbas entered into to obtain their aid, by which it was stipulated that all plunder should be equally divided, that each should appoint a governor, and that the future customs both of Ormuz and Gombroon should be equally shared, was disregarded from the moment the conquest was completed.

Another article of the treaty entered into between the allies was that all Mohammedans made captive were to be given up to the King of Persia, and all Christians to the English. Mr. Monnox, the head agent of the East India Company, when he reported the fall of the island, boasted of his humanity to the prisoners, but added, "I must trust to Heaven for my reward, for the Portuguese are but slenderly thankful!" The sanguine anticipations of the same chief agent, who wrote to England, dating from Ispahan,

"that their dear infant" (this term was applied to their commercial factory at Gombroon) "would receive new life if the King but kept his word," soon vanished; and we find the same person, after the fall of Ormuz, stating that no benefit whatever can be expected from that possession unless it be held exclusively by the English.

But every expectation of advantage that had been indulged was soon dispelled by the positive refusal of Abbas to allow the English either to fortify Ormuz or any other harbour in the Gulf.

Sir Thomas Herbert (the historian of a mission sent by King James the First, under Sir Dodmore Cotton, Sir Robert Shirley, and other gentlemen), in his work, "Travels in Persia," thus quaintly writes of the greatness and downfall of this celebrated emporium. "Ormuz is an isle within the Gulf; in old times known by the name of Geru, and before that Ogiris (but I dare not say from a famous Theban of that name); its circuit is fifteen miles, and it procreates nothing noteworthy, salt excepted, of which the rocks are participant, and the silver shining sand expresseth sulphur.

"At the end of the isle appear yet the ruins of that late glorious city, built by the Portugals, but under command of a titular king, a Moor. It was once as big as Exeter, the buildings fair and spacious, with some monasteries, and a large bazaar or market.

"Of most note and excellence is the castle, well seated,

entrenched, and fortified. In a word, this poor place, now not worth the owning, was but ten years ago the only stately city in the Orient, if we may believe this universal proverb :

> "'Si terrarum Orbis, quæqua patet, Annulus esset,
> Illius Ormusium gemma, decusque foret.'
>
> 'If all the world were but a ring,
> Ormuz the diamond should bring.'

"This poor city was defrauded of her hopes, continuing glory, such time Emaun Kooli Khan, Duke of Shyraz or Persepolis, took it with an army of 15,000 men, by command of the King of Persia, who found himself bearded by the Portugal. Howbeit, they had never triumphed over them, had not some English merchant ships (then too much abused by the bragging Lusitanian, and so exasperated) helped them, by whose valour and cannon the city was sacked and depopulated. The captains serving the East India merchants were Captains Weddell, Blyth, and Woodcocke.

"Their articles with the Persian Duke were to have the lives of the poor Christians at their disposal, some cannons, and half the spoil; and accordingly when the city was entered, after a brave and tedious resistance, forced to yield by superior numbers and famine, every house of quality, magazine, and monastery, were sealed up with the signets of the Duke and merchants. By which good order, the Company had no doubt been enriched with two millions of pounds (though but their share), had it not been prevented

by a rascal sailor's covetousness, who, though he knew the danger of his life and the loss of the Christian's credit, yet stole in a monastery sealed with both consents, commits sacrilege upon the silver lamps, chalices, crucifixes, and other rich ornaments, and stuffed so full that, in descending, his theft cried out against him, was taken by the Persians, led to the Duke, confessed, and was drubbed right handsomely.

"But the greatest mischief came hereby unto the English, for the perfidious Pagans, though they knew the merchants were not guilty of his transgression, and consequently had not broke the order,—notwithstanding, the soldiers went to the Duke, saying, Shall we sit idle while the English, by stealth and secresy, exhaust all our hopes of benefit and riches? Whereat, the Duke, glad of such advantage, replied, If so, then go and have your desires. Whereupon they broke open the houses and store of what was valuable, and made themselves masters of all they found; whilst the confident sailors lay bragging of their victories a-shipboard. And when they were possessed of that was done, they exclaimed as men possessed; but the Persians understood them not, nor cared they what their meaning was, seeing they verified the adage, 'Give losers leave to prate.'

"Yet they found enough to throw away by that small, sufficiently showing their luxurious minds and prodigality if they had gotten more: dicing, whoring, brawling, and tippling, being all the relics of their husbandry and thankfulness.

"Only Captain Woodcocke had good luck and bad: lighting upon a frigate that stole away, unwitting to the enemy, loaden with pearls and treasure, that he took for a prize, and kept all to himself, perhaps worth a million of reals, or better. But see ill-fortune. The Whale (of which he was captain), rich laden with his master's and his own goods, hardly by Swaley Road without the Bar, sunk, and was swallowed by the sands, occasioned by a hole neglected by the carpenter, and failing to carine or mend her, the ports were open and took in water, went to prove that mere whales are subject to destruction, perished in that merciless element; Woodcocke not long after overwhelming his life with too much care, too unable to moderate so great misfortunes.

"This poor city is now disrobed of all her bravery; the Persians each month convey her ribs of wood and stone to aggrandize Gambroone, not three leagues distant, out of whose ruins she begins to triumph.

"Ormuz island has no fresh water, save what the fruitful clouds weep over her in sorrow of her desolation, late so populous; these are preserved in urns or earthern jars, and are not comfortable to drink in, but do give bedding a cool and refrigerating sleeping-place; to lenify scorching Phæton, who is there potent in his flames and sulphur."

After the destruction of Ormuz, the English derived no advantage from the share they took in the transaction. They had, it is true, revenged themselves upon an enemy they

hated, and had destroyed a flourishing settlement, but their intrigue with the Persian despot brought with it its own punishment, and after playing the undignified part of cat's paw, they were flung on one side and their alliance disowned. The one other historical event for which Ormuz is remarkable or interesting is the circumstance that it served as the retreat for the Guebres or Fireworshippers, and hence its glorification by the author of "Lalla Rookh." From Ormuz these religionists proceeded to India, where, as is well known, they adopted the name of Parsees.

To look at them, men, women, and children, you would say that a race less fitted to be the object of a poet's "fine frenzy" does not exist on the face of the earth, or even under the earth, I should say. They are thrifty and industrious, and are formed by nature to be what Napoleon was kind enough to say we English were, "a nation of shopkeepers," but as to possessing any qualifications to be considered a race of warriors, the idea will raise a smile on the lips of residents in Western India.

During the terrible crisis of the Indian mutiny, when affairs in Bombay itself began to look black, when sedition-mongering Sepoys were blown away from guns on Bombay Green, it is a fact that no Parsees came forward to enrol themselves in the volunteer ranks with their European brethren, and yet had an *émeute* occurred they equally with ourselves would have been the sufferers in blood and money,

for equally with Christians these worshippers of the sun were hated by both Hindoo and Mussulman. The Parsees were the greatest sufferers in the commercial crash of 1866 at Bombay, for they were the wildest among the herd of speculators and company promoters, and I am sorry to say many of them were the first to seek the ægis of the bankruptcy courts. Some few there were, "faithful 'mong the faithless found," who had a higher notion of commercial morality.

The "*Times*," in a letter from its Calcutta correspondent, writes: "The Parsee community has lost most heavily for its numbers. What the Parsees have lost the Hindoos have got. Nor have the idols come off badly. The visitor will look in vain for a Parsee 'agiare,' or fire temple which is not of the meanest character." It would appear as though the devotional fervour of the Guebres rivals their military ardour. The peculiar characteristics of the Parsee physiognomy are well known even to Londoners, for gentlemen of this persuasion may frequently be seen on 'Change and elsewhere. I remember the lamented Viscountess Canning, when asked—during her short stay at Bombay, while accompanying her husband to take up his post of governor-general—what she thought of them, declared that they were the plainest people she had yet met with in her travels. Yet all honour to where honour is due. The name of one man stands out from the Parsee community proudly conspicuous for his princely and unsectarian charities. Bombay will

ever boast of the late Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy, Bart., as one of her worthiest citizens. A remnant of the race still remains at Yezd, and in some other parts of Persia.

The town of Ormuz never rose again to its old pre-eminence, for the trade that flowed through the Persian Gulf to India found other channels, and the Red Sea and Egypt were formidable rivals to the ancient Portuguese dependency. The reader of history will follow the rise and decay of this once first-rate naval power with interest, for the Portuguese sowed so much in the East of which we English, who closely followed in their footsteps, reaped the advantage. As with the Persian Gulf, so it was with the Malabar coast, we were rivals ever, and it was obvious one of the two great maritime powers must disappear from the scene. The nation, whose dealings, like those of the Portuguese, were founded on fraud, and cruelty, and rapacity, were overwhelmed in their own evil doing; while we (whatever may have been our faults and shortcomings we did not scruple to tax ourselves with them, and seek to remedy those that were the most crying) are daily consolidating our rule in the East by strictly following a policy of justice. Yet the Portuguese were as a nation wonderfully active and successful navigators, and it was as pioneers and surveyors in those then unknown seas that we owe them a debt of gratitude.

Any Indian traveller, who has visited their sole remaining dependency of Goa, and has formed his idea of an inhabitant

of ancient Lusitania, from the miserable degenerate half-breeds to be found there,—and who are met with all over Western India, where they generally fill the menial capacity of a body servant, or perhaps rise to the dignity of a ship's fiddler,—would do a grave injustice to this once adventurous and gallant people, as can be shown by referring to the history of their noble defence of Bassein and Tanner against the overwhelming forces of Bajee Rao and his victorious Mahrattas.

From Ormuz, once celebrated for "its very great company," and its "covering of precious stones," let us pass to Bunder Abbas, or Gambroon, on the mainland, from which the island is separated by a strait of about ten miles in breadth. This city was also of considerable importance in its day, and, after the fall of Ormuz and the transference of its trade hither, became the chief port of Persia. The English, Dutch, and French had factories here, but its greatness was short-lived, and the trade was diverted to Lingar, Sohar, and Bushire, which latter became the chief port of the Persian kingdom. At the present day, however, the trade of Gambroon is not inconsiderable for an Eastern seaport. Shah Abbas was not insensible to the material advantages derivable from the heavy imports he levied on foreign merchandise, and the foreign factories established at Gambroon were protected by that monarch. Like every other town of note in this part of the world, an evil fate has overtaken this once

flourishing and famous emporium. Before Shah Abbas, assisted by the English, drove the Portuguese from Ormuz, it appears Gambroon, though forming his chief seaport, was not a town of any great trading importance. Little is known of its early history. The factories of the European commercial powers once established, it seemed destined to attain the proud position formerly filled by Ormuz.

Here, instead of being carried in ships to Bussorah and the northern ports of the Gulf, a very considerable portion of the imports from India and Africa were landed, and transported hence by means of caravans to the interior of Persia and the adjacent countries, so that Gambroon became the seaport of Persia. Towards the close of the seventeenth century, the internal commotions and distracted state of Persia frequently interrupted the route into that country for long periods, and trade was consequently diverted into the northern ports. "However," as Mr. Wellsted remarks in his interesting Travels, "it should still be remembered that this route conducts by one of the natural passes into the heart of Persia, for when Bushire, a few years ago, remained for some time in a disturbed state, commerce found its way again into this channel, and if that had not speedily been restored to peace, Bunder Abbas would very soon have recovered a considerable portion of its former importance."

Of the three factories established here, the Dutch alone remains in a state of preservation, and was used till recently

as a residence by the Imaum of Muscat. In 1827 Sayyid Said, the then ruler, collected a revenue of 8,000 or 10,000 dollars from the port. Its exports are Persian carpets, tobacco, and dried fruits; its imports, Indian cloth, etc. The annual revenue from these articles was at the same period estimated at £30,000 sterling.

The town is situated on a slope which approaches close to the sea; the houses are few, and what there are are wretchedly constructed, the people mostly dwelling in huts.

Like the inhabitants of all large trading communities in Arabia and Asiatic Turkey, they are a mixed population, composed of Persians, Arabs, Kurds, a few Armenians and Bedouins; their number, constantly fluctuating, may be estimated at from 4,000 to 5,000. Just without the town there are some tanks which were excavated with extraordinary labour by the Portuguese; the length of the most extensive cannot be less than half a mile. These are intersected at right angles towards the extremity by two others, so that they assume the shape of a cross.

These and other prodigious architectural and engineering remains, across which the traveller stumbles in every part of the Asiatic Continent, in Egypt, as well as in Europe, attest the fact that all great nations of antiquity and of more recent times, whether as natives or conquerors, have devoted enormous sums of money, and employed all the resources at their disposal, in order to leave behind

them some *magnum opus* that would typify to future generations their greatness in the arts of peace or war. I need not refer to the great military wall in China, the vast tanks in Ceylon, Aden, and Gambroon, the wonderful canal system in Mesopotamia, and the colossal remains of Ctesiphon and numerous other cities in ancient Chaldœa, while India itself is filled with noble palaces and mausoleums, erected by Hindoo and Mohammedan conquerors. Till within recent years, with the exception of the Ganges canal, there was not in India a single public work or building that it was in the least probable could be worth one hundred years hence a journey of ten miles to inspect, or indeed would have one stone left on the other, and this after an occupation of a century! It has been said that were we to yield up our hold of the country to-morrow, nothing would be left in the peninsula, from Cape Comorin to Peshawur, to testify to our occupation, but a huge pile of broken beer bottles. This stigma, however, has within recent years been wiped off from our escutcheon. Though our consumption of Allsopp's remains undiminished, the land has been intersected and opened up by magnificent railroads, and several millions are annually spent in public works.

Wellsted says that the inhabitants of Gambroon amused him with a few curious tales relative to the former European residents. Very generally these had reference to the mighty bowls of punch in which they indulged, or the enormous

sums of money they lavished in items of luxury for their table. Some cellars or vaults to which they resorted in very hot weather, called in Baghdad, "Serdaubs," the ruins of their church, and a few mouldering tombs without inscriptions, are all that remain to denote their brief sojourn in this far distant land. The tombs, situated just without the town, are twelve in number, and are either domes or pyramids supported on columns; but the now bigoted inhabitants of Gambroon have not permitted the bones of these exiles to remain in peace in their last resting-place; every grave has been uptorn and spoiled of its charge.

Colonel Pelly, Political Resident in the Persian Gulf, wrote as follows regarding the aspect of Bunder Abbas in the year 1863 :—

"It is a walled township of about 8,000 or 9,000 inhabitants, with suburbs extending along an open sea-beach backed at a distance of fifteen miles by a range of lofty and apparently desolate mountains, although the clefts in the middle slopes of this range produce excellent oranges, and are said to be otherwise studded with trees. Behind the present town are some large tombs of superior construction, but they are falling into ruins. To the westward lie the debris of an extensive former town, and among them the ruins of an extensive former factory, which seems to have been in the first instance pulled down to prevent its being used as a point of attack by any hostile force. A better and more sheltered

position for a port lies about four miles to the westward, at the entrance of the Clarence Straits, which is said in former times to have been the site of a small Bunder. The present Bunder Abbas is destitute of any pier or other artificial improvement, and has only from two to three fathoms of water at a distance of two miles out, so that during the frequent southerly or south-easterly winds, it becomes a lee shore lashed by a heavy surf, rendering it necessary for craft to seek shelter under the islands of Ormuz and Kishm."

The heat on the waters around Ormuz and Gambroon is at times terrific. Moore writes with poetic enthusiasm of

"Harmozia's sea sleeping in bright tranquillity,"

but had he experienced the stifling sultriness of the sea that laves the shore of the island about which he raves in flowing rhythm, he would have struck his lyre to a different tune, or at least would have placed his *dramatis personæ* on a less forbidding shore.

When cruising about the Gulf in a 10-gun brig of war, to which I was attached, it was always the custom during the hot season to spread double awnings, and no European seaman was permitted to go aloft during the heat of the day unless absolutely required, and yet many of our men suffered from the effects of the fearful heat; sleep was scarcely possible during the day, and the still cloudless nights were hardly more favourable to repose. While lying off the pearl banks, the seamen could be seen at night reclining on the

bare planks in the waterways or anywhere, with the perspiration trickling from every pore, and forming little pools beside them as they slept. The following instance of the intense heat prevailing may be related, as it is an incontestable fact. During the hot season of 1821, H.M.'s frigate Liverpool was in the Persian Gulf, when the weather gradually increased in warmth; double awnings were spread, and, according to practice, the decks were kept constantly wetted, and every precaution taken to prevent the exposure of her men; yet in one day, from a species of *coup de soleil*, she lost three lieutenants and thirty men. If for ever so brief a period they exposed themselves to the sun, they were struck down senseless; vertigo followed, accompanied by foaming at the mouth. In the greater number of cases sensation never returned. The frigate's maindeck at one time is described as having resembled a slaughter-house, so numerous were the bleeding patients.

I am afraid that I have played "old gooseberry" with preconceived notions of Ormuz and "the parts that thereunto adjacent lie," but truth is great, and will prevail.

VIII.

Muscat and Kishm: the Fleet of Alexander the Great in the Persian Gulf.

I WILL now, gentle reader, with your kind permission, request you to "consider yourself" at Muscat, which, as you are of course aware, is situated on the coast of Arabia, about 150 miles from the entrance to the Persian Gulf. Whenever I read "Lalla Rookh" I think of days passed in that dreary Gulf. It certainly cannot be called an uninteresting locality. The poets who have sung of its beauties, from the Persian "Hafiz" to our own Thomas Moore, would alone render it ground sacred to the muses of poetry and song; but I must say—though myself of anything but a prosaic turn of mind, and though ever anxious during my wanderings to discover the poetic interest which might attach to the country or place where I happened to be sojourning—I never could, for the life of me, discover what Tommy Moore found in this inland sea, or the shores which surround it, to go into raptures about. Perhaps the

mysterious beauties of which he raved were too deeply hidden to be patent to any ordinary pair of eyes, or to one not gifted with the poetic second sight. To give an example. Moore—doubtless at the time in a "fine frenzy"—writes in this wise of Bahrein:—

> "The morn hath risen clear and calm,
> And o'er the Green* Sea palely shines,
> Revealing Bahrein's groves of palm,
> And lighting Kishma's amber vines."

Now, it is hard to say which island bears off the palm of sterility, whether Bahrein, with its "groves of palm," or Kishm (or Kishma, as the poet calls it) with its "amber vines," a trace even of which luxuriant plant I have never discovered throughout its extent. I always used to think, in contrasting the two islands, that that one off which the ship at the time happened to be anchored was the most uninviting. As I have thus gazed at the desolate desert shore of those dreary, never-to-be-forgotten places, I have rubbed my eyes and turned back to the page before me from the sad reality which blasted my eyesight; I speak the word "blasted" advisedly, and with a literal meaning, for the hot wind would blow in a strong sirocco from the shore, bearing on its wings clouds of impalpable but gritty atoms of the sand, which spreads in arid and seemingly limitless wastes as far as the eye can reach, that is, if the optic organs

* The Persians call the Gulf, and justly, the Green Sea.

are in a condition, after a sandstorm, to "reach" anywhere. At such times I would leave the deck in disgust, and, thoroughly disenchanted, descend the companion-ladder leading to the wardroom, the while recalling to my mind—with an inward ejaculation of "lucky fellow"—the fact that Moore had never in his life been in this part of the world, and therefore performed the mental feat which has rendered famous the philosophic German professor who had never seen a camel, but nevertheless "evolved out of his inner consciousness" a likeness of the animal.

Soon after I was appointed first lieutenant of H.M.'s ship Boomerang we received orders to sail for the Persian Gulf, and after rather a long voyage (for we encountered baffling winds most of the way, and the Boomerang was an old-fashioned eighteen-gun sloop-of-war), we at length dropped our anchor in Muscat Cove. This place, like many Eastern cities that I have visited, presents a very fine appearance from a distance; but, most surely, in this instance,

"'Tis distance lends enchantment to the view;"

for when you come to land, and walk in its miserable streets, you are at once struck with the seeming poverty and squalor of the town. The thoroughfares, even for an Oriental city, are so extraordinarily narrow that the inhabitants often, during the heat of the day, spread palm leaves across from the upper parts of the houses, and this extemporized awning effectually shades the footpath below. Talking of the heat,

I really believe Muscat to be the hottest place on this earth, and this distinction it actually bears in the East. Seldom is the thermometer below 90° in the shade. This intense heat is attributable to the fact that the town is situated on the slope, and at the foot of an amphitheatre of craggy hills. No breeze can consequently come from the interior, and it is only open to the sea from the N.W. From this point very often gales of wind quickly arise and blow into the small cove, which is not considered, therefore, very safe by seafaring men. If your anchors do not hold on such occasions, your ship must inevitably be driven on the rocks which almost landlock the bay. On the summit of these precipitous cliffs are built the forts which guard the harbour, and which are about the most tumble-down looking specimens of fortifications I have ever encountered in all my peregrinations. One would think that the concussion from our guns, as we saluted the flag of the Imaum, would have brought them down about the ears of the swarthy artillery-men who crowded the battlements; but when these same "sons of guns" betook themselves to their quarters and commenced firing the return salute—a compliment which was paid by a dropping, irregular discharge far from agreeable to the ears of well-disciplined men-o'-war's-men — one positively felt alarmed for the safety of the unhappy gunners. The ordnance, some of which, from their antique appearance, you would suppose had been cast in the "good old days of Haroun al Raschid,"

have an inveterate habit of bursting, and thus prematurely consigning to the bosom of "the Prophet" the bodies of the "true believers" who man them. On such joyous occasions, too, the dilapidated walls—in the embrasures of which the cannon are often simply laid without carriages of any description—crumble to pieces, and we used to watch, with amusement, the shower of stones which came clattering down the steep rocks.

The Imaum who was ruling when we visited the place, had been for more than forty years our stanch and trusted ally; the British Government had made him handsome presents as a recognition of his fidelity, and he, determined not to be outdone in liberality, returned the compliment by sending Her Majesty some most valuable Arab horses. Whenever any of the Queen's or East India Co.'s ships of war entered his ports, whether at Zanzibar or Muscat (for at that time the two territories were under one ruler), the old man always received the officers in great state, but with the utmost affability, and after coffee and sherbet with sweetmeats had been handed round, sent them away loaded with handsome presents. The sailors, also, were not forgotten, but were provided with boat-loads of fruit and vegetables at his Highness's expense. These Eastern potentates have still the old patriarchal ways of showing the respect as allies, or the allegiance as vassals, they owe to the great English nation. Often when cruising along the desolate coasts of

the African continent, I have seen those wild chiefs or sheiks of the desert, who might wish to deprecate the wrath of the dreaded "Feringhees" for some predatory or lawless act of their tribe, bring off to the ship, as peace-offerings, such presents as sheep and dates.

Soon after our arrival at Muscat, a party of the officers of the Boomerang, including myself, went on shore together "for a cruise," and also to "look up" the British consular agent. I happened to have known this gentleman at Aden some years before, and a very slight acquaintance is required in the East to form a sufficient apology to allow of one's claiming the hospitality of a fellow-countryman. On landing, we found, on a closer inspection, that the only buildings which really could be called handsome were the mosques, which, with their lofty minarets, were certainly picturesque; and the Imaum's palace and harem, out of the windows and in the verandahs of which could be seen the graceful figures of the dark beauties immured within their walls, though their faces were in part concealed by the envious veil worn by Mohammedan women. The Sultan had about three hundred of these ladies cooped up in his palace; and some of them were now looking about and inspecting with curious eyes the "dogs of unbelievers" who had landed under the window of the seraglio. After strolling through the narrow streets and going into the market-place or bazaar, where we purchased some articles and "curios," we bent our steps

to the Consulate. The Political Agent welcomed us heartily, and we were all soon discussing a good dinner and a Persian wine which comes from Shiraz, and is sold in "carboys." Some people profess to think it better than sherry; but I think it is much the same with this wine as with "Cape"; people who can't afford to drink the more expensive liquor, but are too proud to own it, always protest, when filling your wineglass with the somewhat mawkish substitute, that they "much prefer it to sherry, my dear sir; always drink it." Not that our host on this occasion regaled us with Shiraz alone; no, he was too much of a connoisseur, and too liberal. We chatted away about old times at Aden, and were sorry enough when the dull roar of a gun, reverberating among the rocks, warned us it was time to proceed on board the old Boomerang, which was to get under weigh that night.

To the westward of the cove of Muscat is the capacious harbour or Bay of Mattrah. The town is about three miles distant from Muscat, of which indeed it may be considered a suburb. Mattrah has docks for shipping, and its population, which exceeds that of Muscat, is chiefly composed of fishermen and pilots. Many of the wealthier inhabitants of the capital of Oman have their country-houses here, so that it may be considered the west-end of Muscat.

The city owes its greatness to the enlightened policy of our ancient ally, the late Sultan Sayyid Said, to whom I have

already referred as an ardent supporter of the British alliance, as indeed he well might be, for he owed his throne to our intervention on his behalf against the overwhelming military power of the Wahabees, who advanced their standard to the Persian Gulf, and subdued the Jowassamee pirates, forcing them to embrace the reformed religion of Abd-ul-Wahab.

Muscat has been the scene of constant revolutions within recent years, indeed, more or less, ever since the death of the good old Sultan. It very soon ended in the disruption of the kingdom he ruled so long, and now Muscat, or rather Oman and Zanzibar, with the adjacent coast-line. north and south, and the island of Pemba, own the sway of two potentates. In the latter part of 1869 the ruler of Muscat suffered his people to open fire upon one of the armed ships of the Bombay marine, but reparation has since been demanded and made in the most public manner to the British Resident, Colonel Pelly. The present ruler, Azan-bin-Ghes, has displayed much enterprise; his last achievements have been the humiliation of the Wahabees, and of the warlike Arab tribe of Beni-bu-Ali, who occupy the south of Oman.

The Persian Gulf is some 560 miles in length, by an average breadth of 180 miles, and its shores are studded with islands, particularly on the Arabian side, where there are numerous groups, one of them known as the East India Company's Islands, boasting a sufficiency of isles to entitle it to the distinctive appellation of Archipelago.

I will first describe whatever there is of interest in the large island of Kishm, premising that a large portion of the information I shall lay before my readers has been derived from the notes of voyagers who have traversed these regions.

Kishm, the largest island in the Gulf, is well known to the English reading public through the medium of Moore's Lalla Rookh; rather I should say "little known," for every line in the beautiful poem that treats of the island is as far removed from fact as the utmost stretch of poetic license, even of a Thomas Moore, could effect. The extreme length of Kishm is nearly sixty miles from north-east to south-west, and its greatest breadth from the town of Luft to the island of Anjar on the opposite coast is twenty miles. This small island of Anjar is called Hinjam by the Arabs, and is that mentioned by Alexander's admiral, the great geographer Nearchus, as being distant forty stadia from the greater island of Oarakhta or Kishm, from which it is separated by a strait about a mile in width, with a through passage of six fathoms of water. There are the ruins of a considerable town in Anjar, and numerous reservoirs for water, similar to those at Ormuz. In 1800 it was recommended by Sir John Malcolm to Lord Wellesley, the then Governor-General, as a place admirably suited for an English settlement, and in 1809, during the war with the pirates of Ras ul Khymah, Commodore Wainwright reported favourably of its capabilities for a like purpose. It is a little singular we have

not occupied the island, for it possesses an excellent harbour, as harbours in the Persian Gulf go, and being small is easily capable of defence. The island is low towards its coast, nearly round in shape, and about four to five miles in diameter. At the eastern extremity of Kishm lies the small island of Larrack, a bare uninhabited place, that requires no further notice.

Kishm itself is known to the Arabs as "Jeziret Tuweel," the "Long Island," from its shape, which bears a singular resemblance to a fish—the town of Luft, and the island of Anjar to the northward and southward being either fin, the town of Kishm at its eastern extremity representing the head, and Bassadore at its western end, the tail.

The name of Kishm is derived (according to common belief) from Kismis, the Persian word for the Sultana raisin so largely exported to England from Smyrna and other ports in the Mediterranean. The Portuguese called it Queixome, and it is mentioned under the names of Oracta and Doracta by Pliny and Strabo respectively. In Arrian's account of Nearchus' voyage it is spoken of, as above mentioned, under the name of Oarakhta.

Regarding the popular belief in his time that the King Erythras—who gave his name to the Indian Ocean, as well as to the neighbouring Red Sea and Persian Gulf, which had one common denomination of Mare Erythræum,—was buried in the island, Arrian says: "In Oarakhta the inhabitants

pretended to show the tomb of Erythras, who, they say, was the first sovereign of their territory, and who communicated his name to the Erythrean Ocean, or at least to that part of it which is comprehended in the Gulf of Persia." He goes on to say of Kishm, "It produced plenty of vines, palm trees, and corn, and was full 800 stadia in length. The Governor thereof, Mazanes by name, freely offered Nearchus his service, both as a companion and a pilot in his voyage to Susa."

The history of Nearchus's voyage in that part of the Persian Gulf adjacent to Kishm is easily traceable, and as it was on this coast within sight of the island that he effected his junction with his master, the "Macedonian Madman," I will give a slight sketch of his course. It was from Bardis, now known as Cape Jask, that, as the account written so many hundreds of years ago goes on to say, "they saw a huge promontory stretched out a vast way into the ocean, which seemed about a day's sail distant from them. Those who understood the situation of the country affirmed that this promontory belonged to Arabia and was called Maceta, and that cinnamon and other fragrant spices were conveyed thence to the Abyssinians. From the shore where the fleet lay at anchor, and the promontory which they then saw before them, the Gulf of Persia, which some call the Red Sea, has its beginning." The Grecian idea of the geography of these coasts was most imperfect, and as they had never explored the southern shore of Arabia they

called the Red Sea and Persian Gulf indiscriminately by the name Mare Erythræum. This promontory of Maceta is that now known as Cape Mussendom.

While lying at Cape Jask a controversy rose between Nearchus and Onesicritus, the officer who fulfilled the duties of captain of the fleet, or "captain of the royal galley," as the historian calls him. The latter proposed that the fleet should steer directly for Cape Mussendom, and coast along the waters of the Indian Ocean, which in the then condition of the ships would have brought certain destruction upon the entire fleet. Nearchus was of a different opinion, and summoned his captains to take council on the question. He declared "that Onesicritus must have a shallow memory if he did not remember for what purpose the fleet was ordered to pass those seas." He then assured them that the voyage was not undertaken because the King (Alexander) was unable to convey the whole army safe home by land, but "because he had fixed the resolution of viewing the situation of all shores, havens, and islands; of searching the bottom of all gulphs and creeks, and having an account given him of all maritime places, and which countries were fruitful, and which barren and uninhabited; and that therefore they ought not entirely to pervert the whole design when they were now well near the end of their voyage, especially seeing they wanted no necessaries to prosecute it; he was afraid, as that promontory stretched

itself so much to the southward, that by sailing round the point, they might fall upon some sandy, barren, and sun-burnt region." Arrian adds, "Nearchus's judgment prevailed, and this seasonable advice of his seems to have preserved the fleet, for all the country adjacent to that promontory is said to be wild and uncultivated, and wholly destitute of fresh water." It was truly fortunate for the safety of all who were entrusted to his charge that the Admiral's decision met with the approval of the majority, and that the fleet sailed through the Straits of Ormuz into the less exposed waters of the gulf, on whose shores fresh water was in some places obtainable.

From Bardis the fleet coasted along to a place called Neoptana, and from thence to the river Anamis, which is that now known as the Minao, a name said to be derived from the words, min and aub, that is to say "land" and "water." Wellsted proceeded up this stream to the town of the same name, which he calls Shah Bunder, and concerning which he says in his "Travels," "On the following morning we anchored to fill up our water at Minaw, and I took advantage of a boat which came alongside to visit the shore: hence I proceeded by its river to Shah Bunder. The course of the stream is very tortuous; its average width at high tide is about 700 yards, and the general depth about six or seven feet; it can then admit vessels of twenty tons, but at low tide its bed is nearly laid bare, and then

has the appearance of a foul muddy creek. About eight miles from the sea in a direct line stands the town of Shah Bunder, where there is a custom-house and a few inhabitants; but the number of people does not exceed six or seven hundred, and it has consequently little wealth or commercial importance. The mountain torrent, which on our maps is found as a river, takes its rise on a mountain about thirty miles distant abreast from the town; it is about one hundred and thirty yards in width, and the water is there clear and blue and deep; its bed is composed of coarse gravel, with small pebbles of primitive rock brought from the neighbouring mountains. Near the sea the banks exhibit a succession of alluvial deposits; its waters, distributed by rills, irrigate a considerable portion of ground, and enable its inhabitants to rear several kinds of grain and fruit. For the luxury of its light and pure water, many of the better classes from the neighbouring towns in the hot months resort here. The inhabitants bear the character of being civil to strangers, as they most certainly were to me."

The river Anamis or Minao is fixed by Arrian in the country of Hermozeia, an appellation which immediately suggests the resemblance it bears to Hermuz or Hormuz, the celebrated isle, better known as Ormuz, situated in the neighbouring waters.

Dr. Vincent, in his learned and painstaking "History of the Commerce and Navigation of the Ancients in the

Indian Ocean," says, "The same title is given to this district by Ptolemy, of which his Cape Ormozon is the boundary, and the means by which the name passed from the continent to the island are common to almost every island in the Gulf. This tract is styled Moghostan, or the date country, in oriental geography, extending to Karpella or perhaps Jask. As we are much concerned with the interior part of it on account of the journey taken by Nearchus to the encampment of the army, it is fortunate we have the information of so circumstantial a traveller as Pietro Della Valle to direct our investigation." This traveller, who intended to settle at Ormuz, then in the height of its prosperity, took up his residence at Minao on the mainland, on account of the expedition that had been projected by the Persians and English against the island, and which led to its capture in 1622. He acquaints us then that "Mina is the capital of Moghostan, and this its name implies, for Mina signifies a fort, and Moghostan is a district of the ancient Karmania, extending from Cape Jask to the north of Gomeroon," the modern Gombroom or Bunder Abbas. He adds, "the heats are insupportable, and the climate most unhealthy; but a more particular circumstance he notices is that the river, which rises in the neighbourhood, falls into the Gulf about a day's journey from the city, and this river can be no other than the Anamis of Arrian, and the Andanis of Ptolemy."

I give these particulars regarding this river Anamis for

the reason that its banks will be famous for all time as the spot where took place the unexpected meeting between the great Alexander and his Admiral, so graphically told by Arrianus in his valuable "History of the Expedition of Alexander the Great and his conquest of Persia."

He says, after leaving Neoptana the fleet arrived "at the mouth of the river Anamis, in a country pleasant and agreeable, and abounding in everything except olives. Here, going on shore, they gladly refreshed themselves after so many hard labours, and joyfully reflected on the various accidents they had encountered during the whole voyage. They there called to mind the great distresses among the Ichthyophagi; their touching on desert and uninhabited coasts; their falling in among nations savage and inhospitable, while they laboured under the most dreadful circumstances of hunger and thirst.

"In the meanwhile, some of them roving farther than ordinary into the country, at a distance from their companions, as their own fancies directed them, found there a certain person, whose cloak and all other habiliments were perfectly shaped after the Grecian manner, and who also spoke Greek, at the sight of whom they could not refrain tears of joy, so strange and unexpected to see one of their own countrymen and to hear their own language spoken.

"They then asked him who he was and how he came thither? He replied that he was a Grecian who had wandered

from Alexander's camp, and that the King and his whole army were not far distant. He was thereupon conducted to Nearchus, with all the acclamations of joy imaginable, and told him that the army lay camped about five days' journey from that place. He also proposed to bring the governor of that province to Nearchus, and performed it accordingly. He consulted with him how he should go to the King by land: which done they went on board the fleet together. Early the next morning he ordered the fleet to be drawn on shore, partly to repair whatever was broken or shattered during the voyage, and partly because he determined to leave most of his forces there; wherefore he took care to run a double rampart and ditch round to secure them, and made a deep ditch from the bank of the river to that part of the shore where the whole navy lay. In the meantime, while Nearchus was busied in making preparations for his journey, the governor of that province, knowing how solicitous the King was for the safety of his fleet, imagined he should be royally rewarded if he carried the first news that the navy was safe and Nearchus on his way thither; wherefore taking the nearest road, he came to Alexander and told him the story. The King, though he gave no credit to his intelligence, was nevertheless rejoiced at the news: but when several days passed from the time when he received the first notice thereof, he began to suspect the truth of what had been told him; and when several messengers had been

despatched, one after another, to convey Nearchus thither, and some, when they had gone a little way, returned without being able to give any account of him; and others, who had gone further, but found him not, returned not at all; then the King ordered the man, who had thus augmented his sorrow by an unseasonable joy, to be taken into custody as the author of a false rumour; and he then began to show by his countenance the excessive grief which he had harboured in his breast. In the meanwhile, others who were despatched with horses and chariots to seek and bring up Nearchus, met him and Archias on their way, with no more than five or six attendants.

"At the first sight they knew neither of them, they were so much altered, and looked so different from what they had formerly done. The hair of their heads and their beards hung down in a neglected manner; their faces were weather-beaten, swarthy and sunburnt, and their bodies emaciated with much watching and hard labour. When Nearchus and his companions asked their way to Alexander's camp they gave them directions and marched straight forward; but Archias, inquiring on what errand they were sent, turned to Nearchus, and told him that those men, taking the same way by which they came, he verily thought were despatched on purpose to seek them; that he did not wonder they knew them not, they being so vastly changed as well in face as habit; 'but,' says he, 'let us make ourselves known to them and inquire

the reason of their journeying this way!' This advice pleasing Nearchus, they asked them whither they intended to travel, and received for an answer, 'that they were sent to search for Nearchus, and the army on board the fleet;' to whom he immediately replied, 'I am Nearchus, and this man is Archias; be ye therefore our guides to the camp, and we will satisfy the King concerning the safety of both!' Taking them therefore into their chariots, they returned towards the camp; some of the company, notwithstanding, having an ambition to carry the first news, hastened and told the King that Nearchus approached in person, and with him Archias and five more of their companions; but as to the army he had heard nothing concerning it, and therefore could give no account of it. From this news Alexander surmised that Nearchus and Archias were, by some extraordinary providence, happily preserved, but that the whole army on board was lost; and therefore his joy for their preservation could hardly balance the grief he endured for the supposed loss of the fleet. However, the messenger had scarcely made an end of speaking when Nearchus and Archias arrived, whom Alexander could hardly know, they were so rough and weather-beaten and their clothes in such a tattered condition. And this mean appearance of theirs served to confirm him in the opinion he had conceived of some disaster having happened to the fleet, which heightened his grief on that occasion. Wherefore, taking

Nearchus by the right hand, and leading him apart from among his friends and guards, he wept for a long time; but at last restraining his tears,—'Forasmuch as you Nearchus and Archias,' says he, 'are returned safe and unhurt, I bear the loss of the whole fleet with patience; but resolve me by what misfortune the navy and army on board came to perish!' Then Nearchus, perceiving the cause of his grief, replied, 'O King, your navy and army are both safe, and we are come as messengers of their arrival.' The King no sooner heard these words than tears of joy succeeded those of sorrow because his fleet was preserved so contrary to his expectations. He then inquired of Nearchus where they were in harbour, who assured him they were at the mouth of the river Anamis, and drawn on shore to be repaired. The King then swore by the Grecian Jove and the Libyan Ammon that the preservation of his fleet was more acceptable to him than the conquest of Asia, and that the grief he should have endured for the loss of that would have counterbalanced all his joy for the acquisition of the other.

"The governor of the province, who had been taken into custody on suspicion of false intelligence, beholding Nearchus, fell at his feet and cried out, 'I am he who brought the King the first news of your arrival, and see how I am received.'

"Then at Nearchus' request he was set at liberty. Alexander then offered sacrifices to Jupiter the Preserver, Hercules,

and Apollo Alexicacos, or the Preventer of Misfortunes; and to Neptune and the other sea-gods for the preservation of his navy. He also exhibited sports of music and wrestling, himself leading on the show. Nearchus was honoured with the chief place there, and had flowers and garlands strewed before him by all the army; which done, the King spoke to him to this effect: 'I will henceforth no more expose thee, O Nearchus, to fresh toils and hazards, but will depute some other to convey the fleet to Susa.'

"To whom Nearchus replied, 'I desire and am in duty bound to obey my sovereign in all things; but if you will show me any favour, let me obtain this my earnest request to preside over the fleet and army on board till they be safe at Susa; and as I have with great danger and hazard brought them thus far, let not another reap the glory of my toils, and finish what is easy and delightful.' Whilst he was thus speaking, Alexander ordered him to take heart, for his request was granted, and so dismissed him with a slender guard to his ships, because they were not to pass through an enemy's country. However this journey back to the sea-shore was not without danger; for the barbarians, having gathered vast forces together, had already assaulted and taken the strongholds in Carmania; their governor had finished what was ordered him by Alexander, and Tlepolemus, who was deputed to succeed him, had not yet got so firm a hold by reducing the natives but that two or three different

parties of them attacked Nearchus and his companions all in one day; wherefore making what haste they could, they, with much trouble and difficulty, at last arrived safe at the seashore."

Setting sail from the countries of Carmania, Nearchus and his fleet proceeded along the coast, past the islands of Ormuz and Larrack, until they arrived at Kishm. I have already extracted the only note of interest in the account of the voyage of the Grecian fleet that relates to this island, and shall now give some particulars concerning its modern aspect and condition.

Kishm is separated from the mainland by a channel called the Clarence Straits. This is of varying breadth. On the western extremity of these straits is situated the town of Bassadore, over which flies the omnipresent flag of Britain. Many dreary months of exile has the writer passed on its arid desert shore, or in the somewhat commodious harbour which is its sole recommendation. Bassadore is the only spot in the Persian Gulf under the occupation of our Government, and was the chief station of the old Indian Navy; here were kept the stores of rope, sails, and ship gear in general, for the use of the vessels of the squadron. There is nothing calling for particular notice about the little village of Bassadore proper in the few buildings, formerly in the occupation of the officers of the defunct service.

Colonel Pelly, when acting political resident in the Persian

Gulf, put together some notes regarding the salt caves and naptha springs, which form the chief objects of interest in this otherwise commonplace island.

The road to the salt caves, after leaving a ledge of rock, in which Bassadore is built, descends a few feet into a plain, sprinkled here and there with a few date trees, and passes the ruins of an old Portuguese fort, situated on a detached rock and overlooking the Clarence Straits. Almost wherever you go in the islands of the Persian Gulf, you stumble across remains of castles and fortified towns formerly in the occupation of this once great nation. In the most retired nooks and corners of Bahrein and Kishm, and other smaller islands, may be seen the ruins of forts that attest at once the ability of the engineers that planned them, and the solidity of the handiwork of their soldier and sailor artisans. Truly the Portuguese of the 16th century were a wonderful race, and the comparison between them and their degenerate descendants of the present age, presents an impressive example of the decline of great nations as caused by corruption. If there is one lesson which history should instil into us Britons as a nation, it is that not more natural is the sequence of the ebb tide on the flood, than the decay and downfall of a nation that swerves commercially, or politically, from the paths of rectitude and honour; as with individuals, so with nations, "honesty is the best policy."

After leaving the Portuguese fort you bend towards the

southern shore of the island, and then pass eastward along a valley towards a line of reddish-looking hills, which form the salt range. The general formation of the island may be geologically described as "a coarse sandstone grit, and conglomerate overlying blue lias marl, similar to that extending along this and the Mekran coast to Kurrachee." The salt formation, which now shows itself, seems to extend some way into the interior of the island, and abuts on the seashore, with which it runs parallel for a distance of some five miles, when it again abruptly turns inland. The general aspect of the range is dark red alternating with slate colour, strewed in part with earth. The scarps are steep, and the heights of the summits vary from 300 to 600 feet. Two sets of salt caves are situated respectively at the extremities of the shore face of the range. The cave on the western side is comparatively small and does not seem to be worked; but one of the largest of the caves on the further extremity is described as of truly noble proportions, being a vault of from 200 to 300 feet in height, of about the same length, and with a span of 60 or 70 feet. The entire arch of the cave is beautifully streaked like marble, while large crystalline salites hang from the roof in festoons white as snow. Another cave of smaller dimensions is in the immediate vicinity, and it is this one which is principally worked. It may be about a mile distant from the beach, and a path easily traversible by donkeys and camels leads up to it.

The blocks of rock-salt quarried from the interior of the cave are laid in heaps at its entrance, to be carried by draught animals to the sea-shore, where they are stowed in small native craft and carried to Muscat, for ultimate export to Calcutta and the east and west of Africa. The period of working is said to be about five months in the year, beginning from the early spring, when from 100 to 150 hands are daily employed. Every boat employed pays to the Sheikh of Kishm a tax equal to about one rupee per ton, and every camel employed in carrying pays two and a half rupees per annum to the same potentate.

It is said—and from the general appearance of the caves it seems certain—that working in them is dangerous on account of the frequent falling in of large blocks of salt from the roof and sides. Many labourers are stated to be killed in this manner, which does not appear to be improbable, as there can be seen one solid mass of pure rock-salt about twelve feet thick, with sides of sixteen feet, which has recently fallen across the centre of the cave. No fresh water is found in the vicinity of these caves; the labourers collect their drinking water from a brackish well and one or two artificial rain-water tanks about two miles distant. A few miles further to the eastward, inland of the small village of Saleek, lie the naptha springs; the naptha is not, however, of any great value as a trading commodity.

On the other side of the island of Kishm, and situated on

the Clarence Straits, is the town of Luft. It lies close to the shore, at the foot of a scarped slope, the scarps being strengthened by flanking works, and at the furthermost end of the town is a square fort, with circular towers at the angles, pierced for guns. This fortified place offered considerable opposition to the combined naval and military forces despatched against it during the short and sharp operations undertaken against the Jowassamee pirates in 1809. The first time our troops assaulted the fortress, which is described as having walls fourteen feet thick, they were driven back with considerable loss, and a howitzer, with which they attempted to force the gate, had to be abandoned. On the following morning, on the troops being formed for the second assault, it was discovered that the place had been abandoned during the night.

Like the rest of Kishm, Luft is farmed by the Sultan of Muscat, and is subject to a sheikh for about 1,500 rupees per annum. It contains about 400 or 500 inhabitants, who appear entirely dependent for trade on the wood which they collect in the neighbouring islands and re-export to all points round the Gulf, for whose firewood consumption the shores of the Clarence Straits form the natural store. Here, as at Bassadore, drinking water is principally obtained from vaulted rain-water tanks. These tanks all along the coast line seem of one construction, being oblong or circular vaulted masonry reservoirs, cut in the soil at the foot of

slopes; at Luft, however, there also are several wells cut deep through the sandstone, and from which water is obtainable when the tanks are dry.

Crossing over the Clarence Straits to the mainland, the voyager strikes upon the township and fort of Khumeer, very similar in dimensions to that of Luft. Colonel Pelly visited this place to inspect the sulphur mines for which it is famous, and speaks of Khumeer as bearing a general resemblance to other townships on the coast line; he describes it "as a cluster of oblong stone boxes round a tumble-down stone fort, and with an outskirting of temporary date-leaf huts." The works of the sulphur mines are dug in a hill, a little inland from Khumeer; they are some height up the seaward face of the hill, and pierce into the Straits in long irregular galleries. The following is a description of the mode of extraction: "The soil is brought out in small pieces, which are piled conically in kilns. These are ignited, and the sulphur falls through an aperture into a receptacle immediately below the centre of the kiln, where it is crystallized, leaving a conical refuse of white lime or gypsum. The sulphur diggings are farmed by the ruler of Muscat, and sub-let to a sheikh for 4,100 krans—about £200 sterling—per annum. The sheikh further pays a sum of 2,400 krans in presents to the Persian authorities. The outlay of sulphur varies from 60,000 to 90,000 maunds of 9lbs. each. The lime is said to be of an excellent quality, and fetches about two rupees for

1,000 maunds when delivered on the sea-shore. The sheikh stated that he re-lets the diggings in numerous sections, and that his own profit amounts to about one kran—or nearly one shilling on the Delhi maund of 28lbs. of sulphur."

Along the shore, as indeed all along the Straits, are a series of slight fishing stakes, fixed at low-water mark, and formed of strips of date leaves, neatly tied together. The principal food of the people consists of fish with dates, and a little coarse barley bread. The fish most common and most relished is a large sort of mullet; soles and a delicious delicate fish called "pomphlet" are caught, but do not appear to be appreciated. Arrian makes mention of the people of these coasts, whom he designates "Ickthuophagi," or eaters of fish. After leaving the Clarence Straits Nearchus sailed along the Persian coast, "past a small desolate island called Pylora on the left hand, and arrived at Sidodone, a small town destitute of all necessaries, but fish and fresh water; and therefore necessity makes them to be Ickthuophagi, or fish eaters, because they live in a country wholly uncultivated." These people, for the above very sufficient reason, are fish-eaters to the present day. Truly there is nothing new under the sun, as the wise man says. I was reminded of this on reading, the other day, the account of the famous voyage through the Pillars of Hercules and down the coast of Africa, undertaken by Hanno, the great king of

the Carthaginians. In one part he says, "Having doubled the fiery regions, we, three days afterwards, entered the Gulf Notu Ceras (the Horn of the East), at the extremity of which lay an island with a lake and islet similar to those we had before discovered. Having touched at this island we found it inhabited by savages. The number of women infinitely exceeded that of the men. They were quite covered with hair, and our interpreters called them Gorilles. We pursued them, but without being able to overtake them. They fled over the precipices with astonishing agility, throwing stones at us. We succeeded, however, in taking three women, but were obliged to kill them that we might not be lacerated by them. We have preserved their skins." Chateaubriand says on this passage: "The barbarity of the Punic mariners must also strike every reader. The hairy women of whom he speaks were, probably, some species of ape, but it was sufficient that the African commander believed them to be human to render his conduct atrocious." So that, after all, the discovery of the existence of our "poor relation," the Gorilla, is of no modern date.

It is somewhat singular how slight has been the change in the name of the island called Pylora more than 2,000 years ago; it is known to modern geographers as Polior, forming one of a group, of which the others are Nob-fleur, Surdy, and the Little and Great Tomb, at the latter of which the Grecian fleet anchored. Dr. Vincent had

great difficulty in fixing the site of Sidodone, the town where Nearchus watered his fleet, but Buckingham is of opinion that it is the modern town of Shenaz, where those two necessaries, fish and water, can be obtained in abundance.

IX.

Lingah and Bahrein: Modern Persian Gulf Politics.

BEFORE transporting (metaphorically) my reader across the Persian Gulf to the island of Bahrein, I will take him to the town of Lingah on the Persian shore. Lingah is a town distant some twenty-five miles in a north-westerly direction from Bassadore, in the island of Kishm, and is the capital of a province or dependency of the kingdom of Oman, under the government of the Sultan of Muscat. This province embraces the Persian coast from Ras Boostanah to Cape Jask in the east, and includes the islands of Kishm, Larrack or Larej, and Ormuz. The writer, though he has anchored frequently in the roadstead, has not landed at Lingah, but the place is described by Colonel Pelly as consisting of an unwalled town of stone, flanked on either side along the shore line by a series of clusters of houses, overhung with date trees; there is also a fort in the usual state of dilapidation. The roadstead, though sheltered from the north-west, is dangerous for shipping during the prevailing south-east and south-west

winds; however, a solid masonry breakwater affords protection to small craft. About four miles south-east of Lingah lie the ruins of a Portuguese fort, called Kong. Portions of what seems to have been the factory, and a half-moon casemated battery, are still standing close to the water line, as also are the ruins of a breakwater.

The produce of the district consists of dates and barley and wheat, sufficient for home consumption. No import or export duty is levied at Lingah, and, in Colonel Pelly's opinion, it is probably to this fact, and to that of its geographical position, that the prosperity of the town is attributable. At present the township, with its adjacent suburbs, may contain 8,000 or 10,000 inhabitants, of whom the bulk are evidently Africans. Lingah is a very busy place, particularly for an eastern town. Merchandise is bartered by natives of India, Beloochistan, Persia, Arabia, and even of Western Turkestan. Palgrave, who visited it in 1863, says, "It is a pretty place, this Lingah, with its white houses along the open shore, or overhung by palms, not the less graceful for being almost barren; its crowded markets; the large glittering cupolas of its reservoirs, with rows of pitcher-bearing forms coming and going; its palm-leaf workshops; its docks, sounding with the hammer, and steaming with the vapours of pitch and tar; its boats that line the gleaming beach; its clear air and bright sun."

In the markets may be purchased Persian carpets, woven

cloths and dresses, and weapons from Khorassan, and glass-ware, crockery, and Manchester cottons from Europe. A great part of the inhabitants of Lingah are Persians, who, however, are content to be governed by the Sultan of Muscat, though there is a sort of unacknowledged claim on the part of the government of Shiraz of a nominal sovereignty over the thriving seaport, that has never been wholly disallowed during the thirty years it has been under its present rulers.

It is not at all an unusual thing to see 100 sail of native merchantmen lying in the roadstead. There are some ship-building yards here, and vessels of 150 tons, and even of greater dimensions, are frequently launched from them; the shipwrights are chiefly natives of Bombay.

There is no spring of fresh water in Lingah; the main supply is derivable from some huge cisterns, which collect the overflow of the winter torrents as they descend from the mountains down to the sea-shore, and the precious liquid is stored up to last throughout the year. These cisterns are generally circular, having a diameter of from thirty to sixty feet, with a depth of about twenty feet; they are surrounded by high stone walls, and surmounted by a vaulted dome, for the purpose of preserving their contents from the evaporating action of sun and wind. Round the inner margin generally runs a wide stone ledge, so that the water comes right up the wall of the cupola, and is only accessible by the doors and by steps leading down to the bottom. Some of the

cisterns are of an oblong form, and are surmounted by a cylindrical vault; these have but one door. The water is sweet, owing, doubtless, to the calcareous lining of the pits. The town lies close to the sea-shore, with a narrow beach of dry hard sand. The houses are solidly built, partly of stone, partly of brick, and are whitewashed with chunam.

We will now proceed to notice the island of Bahrein, known to Arrian as Tylus, and famed in story and verse, though remarkable, in sober truth, for its pearl fishery. The island is a little over fifty miles in length, and nearly half as many in breadth. A range of low hills, whose highest peak hardly appears to exceed 800 feet in height, runs through the eastern part of Bahrein, but the general character of the island is flat and low, seldom rising more than twenty feet above the level of the sea. Its chief products are rice and very fine citrons, and water is found in abundance all over the island. There are, properly speaking, two islands of Bahrein, for, separated from the one I have just described, is a small island called Moharrek, having a large town of the same name. The strait dividing these two islands is narrow, being scarce one mile across, and so shallow that, at ebb tide, a man can wade from one island to the other.

The town of Moharrek is a pretentious-looking place, and contains numerous villas, which are the country-houses of

the wealthy inhabitants of Menamah. On a neighbouring headland stands a large square fort, strongly built, and provided with guns, which, from the honey-combed appearance, so characteristic of native ordnance in the Persian Gulf, would seem to be more dangerous to their gunners than to an enemy. This fort was once garrisoned by troops, but it is now used as a stable for the fine stud of the Sheikh of Bahrein. There are many spacious but low palaces, occupied by members of the reigning family, and altogether the appearance of Moharrek, with its paved market-place, its white houses set off by the dark huts constructed of palm leaves, occupied by the poorer classes, is much prettier and more picturesque than that of the generality of Arab towns. Menamah, the capital of the island of Bahrein proper, is much larger in extent than Moharrek, extending for about a mile and a half along the shore, and boasts a population of 25,000 souls; it presents from the sea rather a striking appearance, and is, next to Bushire, perhaps the most flourishing emporium of commerce in the Gulf; its extensive market-places and crowd of native trading craft disclose an aspect of bustling activity rarely met with in this uncommercial quarter of the globe. Near the western extremity of the town is a large square mass of white buildings, in which resides the Vice-Governor, brother of the Governor, who lives at Moharrek. The greater number of the dwellings are mere palm-leaf cottages, which Palgrave thus describes

in his Travels: "We entered by a narrow door, and found ourselves in a large open enclosure of palm branches, about eight feet high, set in the ground side by side, and closely interwoven; within the enclosure, and divided from each other by a little space, stood two long palm-leaf huts; one for us, the other was the abode of our sailor and his family. Our dwelling was about thirty feet in length, by ten in breadth, with as much to the top of the sloping thatch roof; a hurdle-like screen divided the interior into two unequal compartments; the lesser served for a store-room, the greater for a habitation. The floor was strewn, a general custom here, with a thick layer of very small shells, almost all of the Helix tribe, and each barely the eighth of an inch in length; these the boys bring in basketsful from the shore, to form a clean and dry in-door footing; over this a large reed mat had been spread."

The palm-leaf cottages just described vary in size, and are mostly arranged in streets and rows; their occupants are chiefly fishermen and boatmen, for the sons of Neptune preponderate in Menamah, rendering it a sort of oriental Deal. Mixed with these smaller edifices, or forming distinct quarters of the town, are large houses of brick and stone, constructed with balconies and porticoes, and laying claim to some pretensions in regard of architectural elegance, and even occidental ideas of comfort and luxury. Owing, however, to maladministration and religious bigotry, many of these

houses being unoccupied are falling into decay; the Jews, indeed, and many thousands of other religionists, having departed to set up their tents in other more tolerant cities on the mainland.

The entire political history of the island, as described by that eminent traveller, Palgrave, is a little involved. Bahrein has constantly changed rulers. The law of the strongest is the code alone respected in the East. The island originally belonged to the Persian dynasty, but at the beginning of the last century, the Sultan of Oman, whose successors have been better known to Europeans in the present century as the Imaums of Muscat, having himself shaken off the yoke of the Shah, claimed a right of tribute over the island. Meantime, the Khaleefah family, one of whom, at this time of writing, rules Bahrein, wrested the island from the Persian Governor, and subsequently from the Omanee usurpers. When the Wahabite fanatics overran and conquered all Arabia, Bahrein fell under the sword of these terrible warriors, and was added to their land possessions. Ibrahim Pasha, the adopted son of the Viceroy of Egypt, Mehemet Ali, marched his army in one great procession of victory, and finally broke the power of this singular sect of Wahabees by the destruction of Dereeah, their capital, situated in the heart of the wilds of Arabia.

Justice has never been done by history to this wonderful campaign of Ibrahim Pasha. The Egyptian general pos-

sessed a combination of acute statesmanship and splendid generalship rarely concentrated in one man; and he performed a task in the wilds of that trackless desert that had baffled the genius of Trajan and of the ablest commanders of Rome, and of monarchies far more ancient, and that daunted the mighty Alexander himself, in his feverish pursuit of military glory. As every one knows, all Easterns are, and have been from the days of Haroun-al-Reschid, and for centuries before, as we learn in that most ancient of all Eastern books, the Bible, all Orientals, I say, are great at story-telling and story-listening; and a tale is told of Ibrahim Pasha, and the way in which he was appointed to command the Egyptian army that humbled Wahabee pride in Arabia and Bahrein, almost too characteristic of the man not to be true. After Tarsoon Pasha's ineffectual attempts for nearly three years to break the power of the followers of Abd-ul-Wahab, and his death, while so employed, Mehemet Ali assembled together at Cairo all his great generals and councillors of state, to deliberate on the best mode of effecting this object. Having explained at length to those present why he had called them together, and what was his desire, the Viceroy pointed to an apple which lay on the floor of the divan; it had been placed exactly at the centre of the large carpet spread in the hall before them. "Now," said he, "whichever of you can, with his hand, reach and give me that apple, but without placing

his foot on the carpet where it lies, he shall command the expedition against Nejed." Many a lithe bey sprawled his full length on the ground, with his heels just out of the carpet rim, and his arm outstretched to the fruit; but the distance was too great, and the apple remained ungrasped. One after another, each tried some new device, but all in vain, and ended by giving it up in despair. At last the short, stout, Ibrahim rose, bowed to his adopted father, and offered to execute the difficult manœuvre. All laughed, not doubting of his failure. But their scorn was soon changed for admiration, when Ibrahim Pasha quickly set to work rolling up the carpet from its rim inwards, till the apple stood within an easy reach. He then took it up and handed it to his father, who understood the figurative enigma, and forthwith named him commander-in-chief of the Egyptian army. Palgrave, who recounts this tale, adds: "Fable or fact, the idea herein contained, regarding the character of the country to be invaded, is by no means bad or inadequate." Like the late Abyssinian war, so admirably conducted to a glorious conclusion, the whole difficulty of the proposed expedition lay in conveying a regular army across the broad desert-margin that fenced in on every side the seat of power of the Wahabees, who, in their fanaticism, have been not inaptly compared to the Puritans.

Not long after the fall of Dereeah, Sayyid Said, the great Sultan of Muscat, our staunch ally, and who ruled over

Oman for so many years with great wisdom and success, being engaged at that time in the act of encroaching upon the territory of Persia, by quietly possessing himself of the island of Kishm and the strip of mainland adjacent to it, laid claim to Bahrein, and forthwith rendered the island tributary to him. Some years after, the Wahabees, who though defeated were not quite crushed, made another attempt to conquer the island, but met with a repulse at the hands of Ali-el-khaleefah. The Sheikhs of Bahrein, dreading the vengeance of this vindictive power, continued up to a very recent date to pay an annual tribute, though they did not scruple to lay claim to Persian or Omanee support just as occasion might require.

One of the great peculiarities of Bahrein is the submarine springs which are to be met with along the coasts; the natives secure water from them by diving down and holding the mouths of skins over the orifices from whence the fresh water, rushing out with great force, quickly fills the skins, which then float the divers to the surface; indeed, in some places the rush of water is so great that the women collect it in their pitchers in a drinkable state on the surface of the sea.

At Bahrein is centred the pearl fishery, which forms the chief means of support of a large number of its inhabitants, and in which over 2,000 boats are engaged. The mode of diving for pearls has been described so often by numerous

travellers that I will not trouble my readers with a recital of the oft-told tale. Each boat pays a license tax to the Sheikh of Bahrein, who also exacts a heavy duty on the product, while any one who fishes upon the oyster-beds without government license is liable to prosecution. Besides fishermen and merchants, Menamah contains handicraftsmen who excel in their peculiar branches of manufacture, such as weavers, and workers in wood, metal, and leather. Agriculture, though not wholly neglected, is in a very backward state, which is in a measure owing to the poverty of the soil.

I said just now that pearl fishing formed one of the chief means of support of the inhabitants, and though Bahrein has always been famed for its pearl banks, it was in former days a hot-bed of piracy, only inferior to Ras el Khymah on the mainland. If you were to ask me, in homely phraseology, how these people managed in old times to make both ends meet, my reply would be most fitly conveyed in the words of Shylock, "There be land-rats and water-rats, water-thieves and land-thieves."

The Skeikh of Bahrein and his followers, in those evil days, emphatically came under the latter category, and were "land-thieves" of the first water. All was fish that came to their net; they robbed impartially Christians and Mussulmans—"true believers" and "dogs of infidels"; and acting on the principle that "dead men tell no tales," they

sometimes murdered their victims, after having despoiled them.

There are a considerable number of mosques in the town of Menamah. The country folk, who are almost all of one sect of Mohammedanism, view with the most intense aversion the Wahabees and other sectarians. The religion instituted by Mohammed is divided into two sects, who are animated by as widely different views on the orthodox tenets of their creed as are Roman Catholics and Protestants among Christians. These two great sects into which the "faithful" are divided are called Sheeahs and Soonnies. The Turks and Arabs are mostly Soonnies, the Persians Sheeahs; generally speaking, indeed, the western Mussulmans, from the Euphrates to the Atlantic are Soonnies; the eastern, from the Euphrates to Java, are Sheeahs. The former are distinguished by white, the latter by red turbans; these sects are sometimes styled Sonnites and Sheites. One-sixth of the population of Menamah are Soonnies, and are of the Mohammedan school known as Malekees, so numerous in Egypt and northern Africa; the remaining five-sixths of the people are Sheeahs.

The Mohurrim is the great festival instituted by the latter sect of true believers in honour of Hassan and Hossein, two early leaders of the faithful, the sons of Ali and relatives of Mohammed himself, who met their deaths in the month of Mohurrim. The Sheeahs regard this time as

one of deep humiliation and sorrowful remembrance, and publicly curse the three first caliphs, and particularly Omar; while the Soonnies, who look upon them as usurpers, consider their murder by the reigning caliph as a proper punishment. Hence arise conflicts between the two sects. The Sheeahs of Lingah carry their veneration for these two martyrs so far as to construct five doors in the cupolas that cover the cisterns in which is stored their fresh water. These doors are named, according to an eminent traveller, Palgrave, after Ali, Mohammed, Fatimah, Hassan, and Hossein, and by them enter those who come to draw water; no one is excluded, no toll is taken, the benefit is public in the fullest sense of the word.

On the first day of the Mohurrim the Sheeahs appear to be suddenly snatched away from all interest and employment in the affairs of earth; the streets are deserted, every one is shut up in his house, mourning with his family. On the second day the streets are crowded, but with people in mourning attire, parading along the thoroughfares in funeral procession to the tombs set up here and there as tributes of respect to the memory of Hassan and Hossein. These tombs are representations of the mausoleums at Kerbela and Nujuff, in the province of Bagdad, on the Euphrates, where the two chiefs were buried. In the populous cities of India, where the Sheeahs muster in great strength, these religious observances are carried out with great pomp and splendour, and have often been witnessed by the writer.

In the old days of native government in Oude, vast sums of the money wrung from the miserable inhabitants by her profligate kings were expended in these mock obsequies. The author of the "Private Life of an Eastern King," describing the celebration of the Mohurrim at Lucknow before the annexation, gives an account of the ceremony, which I cannot do better than lay before the reader, as it graphically describes a scene familiar to all Anglo-Indians. "The representation of the tomb of Hassan and Hossein is placed, at the period of Mohurrim, against the wall facing Mecca, under a canopy, which consisted, in the royal Emaumbarra, of green velvet embroidered with gold. A pulpit is placed opposite, usually of the same material as the model, in which the reader of the service—the officiating priest, as we should call him—stands with his face to Mecca and his back to the tomb. This pulpit consists simply of a small raised platform, without railing or parapet of any kind, on which the reader sits or stands, as he may find most convenient.

"Such is the collection of lustres and chandeliers accumulated on these occasions, the glare of the lights, the sparkling of the rich embroidery and gilding, the glittering of the bullioned fringes, cords, and tassels ornamenting the banners with which the Emaumbarra is hung, the turbaned and bearded figures, with their swarthy countenances, expressive of deep-seated grief and humiliation—that Mrs. Meer Hassan Ali might well observe she has been frequently

reminded, in such scenes, of the visionary castles conjured up in the imagination by reading the 'Arabian Nights' Entertainments.' The emblems of Arabic royalty, the embroidered turban, the sun-symbol, and the richly-decorated arms, are always left at the base of the tomb, as evidence of the right of the two youthful martyrs to be considered the heads of the "faithful," a right denied by those atrocious heretics, the Soonnies.

"During the entire period of the Mohurrim, large wax lights, red and green, are kept burning round the tomb, and mourning assemblies are held in the Emaumbarra twice a day; those in the evening being by far the most attractive, and the most generally attended. It was interesting to observe the profound quiet which reigned, until broken by the reader of the service—some favourite Moulvie; the audience always awaiting the commencement of the reading, or the recitation, in the same humble and sorrowing attitude in which they entered.

"The lights are flaring upon the broad turbans; the glittering interior of the Emaumbarra, with its chandeliers and wax tapers, its gilding and its banners, its fringes and its embroideries, is a blaze of light. The preacher is reciting an account of the death of the two chiefs, his keen black eyes glowing with animation as he proceeds; his audience, at first so solemn and so quietly sad, being gradually wound up to passionate bursts of grief. The orator groans aloud

as he recapitulates the disastrous story; his audience is deeply moved. Tears trickle from the eyes of more than one bearded face, sobs and groans issue from the others. At length, as if with a sudden unpremeditated burst, but really at the proper part of the service, the audience utters forth the names, 'Hassan!' 'Hossein!' in succession, beating the breast the while in cadence. At first, somewhat gently and in a low tone are the names uttered, but afterwards louder and more loud, until the whole Emaumbarra rings again with the excited, prolonged, piercing wail. For fully ten minutes does this burst of grief continue—the beating of the breast, the loud uttering of the names, the beating ever louder and more resounding, the utterance gradually increasing in shrillness and piercing energy; until in a moment all is hushed again, and silence, as of deep affliction, falls like a pall upon the assembly.

"But man requires refreshment after his labours—whether that labour consists in being whirled across a frozen country with a biting east wind in one's teeth, at the rate of thirty miles an hour, or shouting 'Hassan' and 'Hossein' for ten minutes in uninterrupted succession, and beating the breast, with the thermometer at 90°. Sherbet is now handed round, and the audience take a savoury stimulant from their belts, and proceed to chew it, until the reading of the service recommences, and the time rolls round again for renewed thumping, renewed shouting of 'Hassan' and 'Hossein,'

and a renewed respite. At the conclusion, a funeral dirge is chanted, called the Moorseah, and being in the vernacular, this portion of the service is much prized by all, because comprehended by all. The Moorseah ended, the whole assembly rises, and recapitulates simultaneously the names of all the true leaders of the 'faithful,' the Emauns ending with curses upon the usurping caliphs.

"In Lucknow they believe they have the metal crest of the banner of Hossein (conveyed thither long ago by a poor pilgrim from the west), and the relic is regarded as peculiarly sacred. The building in which it is contained is called the Durgah; and thither the banners used in the Mohurrim are brought by thronging multitudes, with great display, upon the fifth day. The Durgah is fully five miles from the king's palace; a magnificent building, in the centre of which the sacred crest is fixed aloft upon a pole, the whole elevated upon a platform, hung round with flags and emblematical devices. On the morning of the fifth day of Mohurrim, crowds of all ranks and classes of the people might be seen issuing from Lucknow to visit the Durgah, each little party bearing its own banners. The royal procession was, of course, the most magnificent. Six or eight elephants, with silver trappings, first appeared; the men upon them bearing the banners to be blessed. A guard of soldiers accompanied the elephants. Then came a sort of chief mourner, bearing a black pole supporting two swords, hung from a reversed

bow. Then came the king himself, and the male members of his family, with his favourite Moulvies. To these succeeded a charger, called Dhull-Dhull, the name of the horse Hossein rode when he lost his life. A white Arab, of elegant proportions, was usually employed for this purpose, whose reddened legs and sides (from which arrows, apparently buried in his side, projected), indicated the sufferings of both horse and rider. A turban, in the Arabian style, and a bow and quiver of arrows, are fixed upon the saddle of Dhull-Dhull, and a beautifully embroidered saddle-cloth contrasts finely with the spotless white coat of the animal—the trappings all of solid gold. Attendants, gorgeously dressed, accompany the horse with chowries (for beating away flies), made of the yak's tail. Following Dhull-Dhull might be seen troops of the king's servants, regiments of horse and foot, and a crowd of idlers. The banners are borne through the Durgah, presented to the sacred crest, touched, and then taken out again at the opposite door to make room for others. All day long does this ceremony continue. Fifty thousand banners, so hallowed in the course of the day, I have heard of as being no extraordinary number.

"From a burial to a wedding is often but a step in human life, and nowhere is that step shorter than in the East. The Mohurrim—a season of mourning and of grief, of woe, depression, and penance—contains also the representation

of a wedding. This wedding is commemorated on the seventh day of the fast; the procession preceding it is called the Mayndieh. It is held in remembrance of the marriage of the favourite daughter of Hossein to her cousin Cossim, on the very day that Hossein lost his life at Kerbela. The Mayndieh is a great wedding procession, which sets out at night, and is closely followed by another company, with downcast countenances and in mourning garb.

"First, through lines of soldiers, filing to the right and left, are borne in the wedding presents. Richly decorated attendants advance, carrying silver trays laden with sweetmeats and dried fruits, miniature beds of flowers, and garlands of sweet jasmine; whilst fireworks are let off as they enter the doors. A covered conveyance—that of the bride—the exterior of silver, such as is used by the highest of the female nobility, follows the wedding presents, accompanied by richly-decorated attendants bearing torches. Then come the bands of music, with other torch-bearers; and amid the glad sounds the whole procession enters, and makes the round of the vast hall. The presents are deposited near the model of the tomb, in readiness to be taken to the place of burial a few days after. But scarcely has the richly-decorated wedding procession passed into the Emaumbarra, when another company, with downcast countenances and in mourning garb, draws nigh. The wedding and the death occurred on the same day, and so the funeral

pomp follows hard upon the Mayndieh. The model of the tomb of Cossim, duly supported on a bier, is brought in by the attendants, and a sad mourning procession accompanies it. Sometimes even a horse, duly trained for the purpose, accompanies the party. It is regarded as the horse of Cossim, and bears his embroidered turban, his scimitar, his bows and arrows; whilst over it is held a royal unbrella, the emblem of sovereignty, and a gloriously worked *aftadah*, or sun-symbol. The horse, if he be admitted into the interior, is one, of course, upon whom dependence can be placed; and makes the round of the spacious hall with a solemnity and steadiness of gait befitting the occasion.

"But we have not yet ended with the season of gloom and despondency. All these services at the Emaumbarra—all this consecration of banners and parading of wedding and funeral processions—is but preliminary to a final display of a still more imposing character. The *emauns* lie dead; their deaths alone have been hitherto commemorated; that is, the deaths of Hassan and Hossein. Their funeral and burial have yet to come. For this funeral vast preparations have been made, whilst, for the burial, an imitation of the burial-ground at Kerbela has been duly set apart by each family of large possessions, ages before.

"As the funeral of Hossein was a military display, so on this occasion is every endeavour made to give as military a character as possible to the spectacle. Banners are ex-

hibited, bands play, matchlocks and guns and pistols are fired off, shields are clashed together, and no sound is wanting which serves to bring before the mind's eye the mimicry of military pageants. The poor man, with his little company, falls into the rear of the rich man's larger assembly, that he may get on the faster thereby; for the crowds are dense, and the smaller bands have no little difficulty in making a way for themselves. Besides, some of those heretical Soonnies may be lying in wait to attack or to interrupt; for they, miserable unbelievers! regard the whole display as worse than foolish,—as almost impious, in fact.

"Each procession is marshalled much in the same order; first, the consecrated banners, carried aloft upon long poles, the bearers of the poles usually seated in an elephant howdah. The larger displays will have two or three, or even six elephants so employed. A band of music, discoursing such dirges as their instruments will accomplish and custom prescribes, follows the elephants. Where all are playing, procession jostling procession, company pressing against company, each with its band, it may be easily imagined that the sounds produced are not the most harmonious. The sword-bearer—with the two glittering blades hung aloft upon a black pole, and suspended beneath a reverse bow near its summit—comes after the band. He is supported by men on each side, who also bear aloft

black poles, to which are attached streamers of long black unspun silk.

"Then comes the horse, Dhull-Dhull, as on the former occasion of the consecration of the banners, attended by numerous servants. Two grooms hold the bridle, one upon either side; an officer marches at his head with the sun-symbol; another holds over him a royal umbrella; others accompany him with gilt and silvered staves, whilst running messengers follow with small triangular green banners. The chain armour, gold-embroidered turban, sword and belt, are all fixed upon the saddle of Dhull-Dhull; whilst often the owner of the animal, and head of the procession, walks after the horse as a sort of chief mourner.

"The bearers of incense, in gold and silver censers, succeed. The censers are suspended by means of chains made of the same material, and are thus waved to and fro, as the march proceeds—much as they are waved at the foot of the altar in Roman Catholic cathedrals on the continent. The *lahbaun*, a sweet smelling resin, which is burnt in the censers, is probably the very frankincense so frequently mentioned in the Bible. The reader of the funeral service follows, usually attended by the proprietor of the tomb-model and his friends. Always barefooted, and often without any covering upon their heads, do these mourners follow in sad procession. It is no unusual thing to see their heads disfigured with chaff and dust—the more striking symbols

of profound grief. The tomb-model, or tazia, is borne next; above which a canopy of green cloth or velvet, embroidered with gold or silver in the more showy processions, is spread, elevated upon poles, and carried by several men stationed at the side. The model of Cossim's tomb, the covered conveyance of his bride, the trays of wedding presents, with all the other accompaniments of the marriage procession, follow in order; and lastly, camels and elephants, bearing representations of the tent-equipage and warlike train of Hossein, as he marched from Medina to Kerbela.

"These are all the parts of the procession proper; but in addition to these, oriental charity always demands a train of elephants, the howdahs on which are filled with confidential servants, distributing bread and money amongst the poor. The bread so distributed is believed by the Mussulman ladies to possess certain peculiar virtues of its own, very superior to those of the ordinary staff of life. They will commission their servants to bring them a morsel of such, even though they may themselves distribute, or cause to be distributed, large quantities. Its being given on the great day of the Mohurrim constitutes it holy, sacred, and peculiar.

"All along the march, as the various processions wind by different roads over the country, guns, pistols, rifles, and matchlocks are discharged; whilst the mourning cry, 'Hassan!' 'Hossein!' is heard at intervals, swelling out from the mighty throng.

"The ordinary ceremony of burial is gone through on the procession reaching the appointed place—the model of the burial-ground at Kerbela. The tomb-model, with its various accompaniments of wedding trays and wedding presents, fruits, flowers, and incense, all are committed to the earth, a grave having been previously prepared for the purpose. It is at this part of the ceremony that the long pent-up animosity between the Sheeahs and the Soonnies usually finds vent, and the mimic burial is often made the occasion of loss of life and bloody feuds between the contending factions." But to return to Bahrein.

The island of Bahrein has been sometimes styled in maps and by geographers Awwal, which is the Arabic term for a shark; and Palgrave, when pointing out the mistake into which even so eminent a traveller as Niebuhr has fallen, in so designating Bahrein, is of opinion the error arose from the numbers of that voracious fish which are found off its coasts. These sharks are only of that species known as the "ground shark," and seldom injure the pearl divers; indeed, during the period the cruiser in which I served was stationed off the island, I never knew an instance of a native being seized by one.

Before concluding this paper, I should refer to the peculiarly phosphoric nature of the waters of the Persian Gulf. Its waves swarm with zoophyte life. The Arabs attribute this phosphorescence to the fires of hell, which they say is

immediately below the bed of the Gulf. One would think the consciousness of living above the mouth of the fiery pit that yawns for those who have committed evil deeds in this life, would make those double-dyed sinners more careful in their regard for truth and morality; but, though holding this belief of their unpleasant proximity to hell fire, it is far otherwise. I am inclined to opine they must have an equivalent for our English saying of "Nearer to church, further from God."

One of the vessels of the small Persian Gulf squadron, furnished by the Indian Navy, was, during the fishing season, always lying off the pearl banks to keep the peace among these quarrelsome Arabs and Bahrein folk, and we managed to prevent them from fighting in the water, though the rival crews sometimes landed, and, like pugnacious schoolboys, "had it out" on shore, beyond the reach of our guns or armed boat's crews. Little harm generally resulted from these affrays, for though there was some blood-letting, there was seldom loss of life among the combatants.

Few English readers would care for a dissertation on Bahrein politics. "Who's who" in Oman and the Persian Gulf would not interest many people in London. None the less a few remarks are necessary, in any account of Bahrein, for that island has been achieving for itself, recently, a notoriety that brought down a deserved punishment upon the heads of the semi-piratical chieftains, who caused the "tumasha." A squadron of Her Majesty's ships, and of those of the Bombay Marine,

were despatched from Bombay, and intimation has been received from Colonel Pelly that peace and tranquillity are again supreme in the Persian Gulf. The British Resident, backed by the men-of-war under his orders, has made events follow the course which the Bombay Government regarded as most likely to conduce to good order and well-being in the future; and it may reasonably be assumed that complete success will follow that course. Several of the more restless and turbulent chiefs, who have ever been firebrands in the Gulf, are now in safe keeping on board British vessels, awaiting the convenience of the Resident to dispatch them to India, where, in enforced idleness, they will have time to reflect upon their past career, and its result to themselves as well as to others. Mahomed bin Kuleefa, who caused all the disturbance at Bahrein, has been surrendered by the garrison of Mahrag Fort; Sheikh Nauser has been surprised at sea and captured; Mahomed bin Abdullah, the pirate chief in actual possession, was out-manœuvred, and surrendered himself. Nauser bin Mobarek was first shelled out of one port, and subsequently out of another, to which he had fled for refuge, with considerable loss. A demonstration by the gunboats then compelled him to embark with his chiefs and fly to the Arabian coast.

On the expulsion of the pirates from Bahrein, Esau bin Ali, son of the late chief, was invited over from Guttar on the mainland, and assumed the government of the island on the 2nd of

December, 1869, under conditions appointed by Colonel Pelly, for the Government of India. This young chief was enthusiastically welcomed, and flags were displayed by the shipping and throughout the town. Captain Douglas, of H. M.'s ship Daphne, sustained contusions by the bursting of a mine, but soon recovered.

This disturbance, which may be attributed to the absence of the ships of the Indian Navy, whose officers were peculiarly fitted, from their perfect acquaintance with Persian Gulf politics and people, to cope with these turbulent chiefs, has raised the cry once more for a resuscitation of the service, and steps have been taken by the Governor-General to secure this object.

The naval requirements of India have for some years been the subject of a good deal of inquiry and discussion, and towards the end of 1869 the Admiralty entered into a provisional arrangement with the India Office to place three gunboats entirely at the disposal of the Government out there for duty in the Persian Gulf, with a reserve of three ships of war at Bombay and Trincomalee for service when required. For these arrangements £70,000 a year was to be paid from the Indian revenues. The expediency of this plan is, on the ground of efficiency as well as economy, open to considerable doubt, and it has become a question whether it will or not, after all, be necessary to resort to a partial reconstruction of the Indian Navy, which was broken up on economical grounds in 1863. Operations more or

less active in the Persian Gulf are not the exception but the rule, and the maintenance of a small squadron, if only for the naval police duties we have taken upon ourselves in those waters, seems unavoidable. On the eastern coast, too, at Rangoon and the great convict settlement at Port Blair, something of the same kind is needed. It is probable, therefore, that the Indian Government will find it both expedient and economical to partially retrace their steps, and establish a squadron of half-a-dozen light gunboats for their own particular service, manned by their own officers, serving under the provisions of a local marine act.

[Since the above was written, the idea of reconstructing the late Indian Navy has been abandoned, we believe, from motives of economy. It might also be mentioned that the three Arab chiefs above referred to are now lodged as state prisoners in Asseerghur jail.]

IX.

The Islands of Karrak and Kenn.

THE island of Karrak, though not of great extent, is perhaps to English readers the best known of any in the Persian Gulf. This is chiefly owing to the fact that on more than one occasion it has been occupied by British troops. The island of Karrak is situated some fifteen miles from the port of Bushire, from which, though of no great elevation, it is visible on a clear day. In extent it is about twelve or fourteen square miles, half of which is rocky and unfit for cultivation; in the other portion vegetables and grain are produced. There are many wells of goo water, besides a spring about the centre of the island. A range of low calcareous hills encircles it, between which and the cultivated land there is a plain covered with shells and other marine products. With respect to appearance and soil, this island is far superior to any in the Persian Gulf, and though very hot, its climate is decidedly more salubrious than that of any other station; cucumbers, grapes, melons,

and figs grow in abundance on the cultivated portion. Its great strategical importance, as commanding the entrance to the Shatt-ul-Arab on the one hand, and the city of Bushire on the other, has always rendered it of importance in the political history of the Persian Gulf.

Arrian, in recording the design which Alexander entertained of invading Arabia by sea, enters into a description of that portion of the country which borders on the Persian Gulf, beginning from the Euphrates. Two islands were particularly reported to lie in the sea over against the mouth of Shatt-ul-Arab, or river of Arabia, one of which was not above one hundred and twenty stadia distant from the mouth of that noble river. This was the lesser of the two, covered with thick woods, and on which was a temple dedicated to the "Goddess of the silver bow." The inhabitants had their dwellings round the temple. The report was that harts and goats and other animals strayed in the woods there unmolested, because it was deemed sacrilegious to take them for any other purpose than for sacrifice to Diana. According to Aristobulus, Alexander ordered this island to be called Icarus, from one of the same name in the Ægean Sea, near which Icarus, the son of Dœdalus, fell into the sea and was drowned, for having, according to the well-known old Greek legend, attempted to fly into the upper regions with wings cemented with wax. Buckingham, in his valuable work of Travels in Assyria, Media, and Persia, expresses an opinion

that this island of Icarus is the more northern of a group near the town of Grane, and he is strengthened in this conviction both by the fact that one hundred and twenty stadia, about twelve or fifteen miles, the distance this island was said to be from the mouth of the Shatt-ul-Arab, is too great to allow of its being identical with Karrak, and also because Strabo mentions the same island, and most distinctly states that it would be on the right hand of a voyager from the mouth of the Euphrates towards Arabia, and this consequently would bring it near that coast. He states that the temple already spoken of was erected in honour of Apollo instead of Diana; but in other particulars he agrees with Arrian. In opposition to this view as to distance and position, Col. Sir John McDonald Kinneir, who proceeded, in 1810, along with General Monteith, on a mission along the Persian Gulf to Bussorah, has, in his Geographical Memoir of the Persian Empire, fixed upon Karrak as the Icarus of Arrian, though that island, instead of fifteen, is one hundred miles from the mouth of the Euphrates, and on sailing towards the coast of Arabia it would be on the left instead of the right hand. Buckingham says, "The name of Karrak seems in this instance to have been the only foundation for such an assumption, probably from some supposed resemblance to Icarus; but although a name given by Alexander to an island like this (for it was evidently not its native one) would last but for a short time among the people of the country, as no settlers were placed

there to perpetuate it, and though the facts of distance and position are less equivocal guides; yet if a resemblance in names must be had, that of Okhar or Ukhar (pronounced as a strong guttural in Arabic) may be supposed to resemble the Greek, which Dr. Vincent writes Ikbarus, quite as closely as that of Karrak.

We must pass over an interval of many centuries before any mention is again made of the island. About the year 1750, in the early part of the reign of Kerreem Khan, one of the greatest and best sovereigns that ever ruled Persia, the Dutch became possessed of Karrak in a very singular way, and had not their power in the East been on the decline (although they still carried on a trade with Persia and the eastern parts of Turkey), the possession of the island would have given them a permanent and superior influence to all their European rivals on those shores. The manner in which the Hollanders gained a foothold in Karrak, as told by Malcolm in his History of Persia, is very characteristic of Eastern politics. The Dutch government of Batavia had appointed Baron Kniphausen, a man of considerable ability, as their agent at Bussorah, but the Turkish Governor of that place, on the pretext that the Baron had transgressed the laws of the country, imprisoned him, and refused his release till he had paid a considerable sum of money, amounting in all to 100,000 rupees, of which half was from the Baron's privy purse. Baron Kniphausen proceeded to Batavia, justified himself

completely to his superiors, and then laid before them a plan which combined the resentment of the injury offered to his country in his person, with advancing the interests of the Dutch East India Company. His project was to seize on Karrak, which from its commanding position would enable him to carry out his plans for revenge on his treacherous enemy. He accordingly sailed with two ships, and having secured a grant of the island from the Sheikh of Bunder Reig, who claimed the lordship over it, found no opposition in taking possession of the island, on which he erected some small fortifications. His second step was to blockade the entrance of the river Shatt-ul-Arab with his two ships. Before long the detention of a number of Turkish vessels, bound up the river from India, compelled the Governor not only to make restitution of the money he had extorted, but to court the friendship of the Baron, who likewise received equal attention and respect from all the rulers in the vicinity.

The island of Karrak now rose rapidly into importance. It was a safe emporium; the merchants were in close proximity to several markets, in which it was advantageous to sell, but dangerous to trust their goods for any length of time, as every change in the government exposed them to the hazard of being plundered. Thus the local position of this island was peculiarly favourable to commerce; and it possessed great advantages in the abundance and excellence of its fresh water, and the salubrity of its climate; under

circumstances so propitious, it is not surprising that Karrak should have soon become a flourishing settlement. Its population, which amounted to a hundred poor fishermen and pilots when Baron Kniphausen first established himself there, increased during the period of its occupation by the Dutch to upwards of 12,000 souls. It did not remain long in their possession, however, for only eleven years after they first landed in Karrak it was surprised by a powerful buccaneer and rebel, one Meer Mahura, or Mohunna, and soon relapsed into its former condition of obscurity. Meer Mohunna was, after being expelled from his stronghold of Bunder Reig, driven from Karrak by the English fleet, during which it was said that he fired red-hot shot at our vessels; this was twenty years before the siege of Gibraltar, at which it is generally supposed these missiles were first employed. On this occasion we hear for the first time of our countrymen in connection with Karrak.

During Sir John Malcolm's second mission to Persia, in the year 1808, it was in contemplation to send a force there, but the idea was abandoned. In the year 1838, when Persia, instigated, as was then supposed, by Russian influence, continued to press the siege of Herat, despite British remonstrances, a small military force, with a view of diverting the attention of that country to another quarter, sailed from Bombay, and landed at the island. At that time the question was mooted of sending a British army into Persia by

way of Bushire and Shiraz, but such is the difficult nature of the passes on this route, it was deemed next to an impossibility to attempt to penetrate into the interior with any chance of success; indeed so tremendous are these passes that the great Alexander, in his celebrated expedition, would not attempt them. However, since the successful conclusion of the Abyssinian war the word impossible, as applied to the practicability of penetrating any country, will be abolished from the glossary of terms in the use of our diplomatists, as it long has been from the vocabulary of the British soldier himself. It was humorously said by the special correspondent of the *Times*, when speaking of the country between Lat and Magdala, which had been described as "a table-land," that it appeared to the expeditionary force that it was "a table with the legs turned up," and that the troops had to march over them thus inverted; an army that can do that can emphatically, according to the iron Duke's well-worn phrase, "go anywhere and do anything," and would make short work of the passes between Bushire and Shiraz, if handled by such a consummate general as Lord Napier.

During our occupation of Karrak in 1838, it was surveyed by Captain Goodfellow of the Bombay Engineers, and plans furnished for a fort on the island. Though the thermometer ranges high (betwen 95° and 100° Fahrenheit), fevers are here little known, and it is otherwise very healthy. On the occasions when the author of this paper has paid

visits to the island, which have been pretty frequent while on the Persian Gulf station, there has always been a pleasant breeze, and the place, from its superior healthiness and coolness, afforded a pleasant contrast to Bushire.

The Wellesley line-of-battle-ship, flying the flag of Admiral Sir F. Maitland, visited the island in 1839; and it is spoken of in a work recently published, the Memoirs and Services of Lt.-General Sir S. B. Ellis, K.C.B. Captain Ellis, who was then Commanding officer of Marines on board the Wellesley, writes: "On the 2nd April several officers came off to invite us to the cantonment. I landed with one of my messmates for a walk on the island. The conduit of water was of singular construction, though common throughout Persia. It is a gallery cut through a solid rock at a considerable depth below the surface, having shafts sunk along the line (which is from the hill to the beach) at about thirty yards apart, and which admits the light and air below; they are of the depth of sixty or seventy feet. We also visited some tombs on the north end of the island; there were some very ancient chambers carved out of the solid rock. Some ornamental cornices were still visible, but time had defaced the images which had been carved on a large slab of the rock opposite the entrance. Karrak is of an irregular form, about thirteen miles in circumference; it is entirely of coral and testaceous formation; the low ground is covered with sand."

After its evacuation, Karrak was left to the occupation of

its resident fishermen and pilots till 1856, when the progress of the Persian war necessitated its seizure by a British force. On the 4th December in that year the island was occupied and formed into a military depôt, under an order from Major-General Stalker, commanding the expedition, no opposition being offered by the small body of native mercenaries located on the island for its protection. It was from hence the fleet dropped down to Hallilah Bay, twelve miles to the south-east of Bushire, preparatory to the bombardment and assault of the town on the 10th of the same month. On the conclusion of the war it was again vacated, and has not since been reoccupied by a British force, though it used to be much frequented by the vessels of the Indian Navy bound to Bussorah from Bushire, who always called in here to take on board pilots for the navigation of the Shatt-ul-Arab.

Near Karrak lies Corgo, which is about half the size of the former island, and has a few wells, but is not inhabited, although occasionally frequented by a few fishermen from Karrak. It has historical associations of interest: in the reign of Kerreem Khan, Shah of Persia, the pirate chieftain whom we have already mentioned, Meer Mohunna of Bunder Reig, a small seaport town about thirty miles from Bushire, a man chiefly remarkable for his bravery and bloodthirsty cruelty, having made himself odious to the Persian court by interrupting the communication between Shiraz and Bushire, was attacked by a numerous army, and, after a gallant and

protracted resistance, was compelled to take refuge in Corgo. On this island, almost a barren rock, the desperado not only supported a number of followers and defeated all the efforts of the Sheikh of Bushire to dislodge him, but added to his means by plundering a number of vessels, and succeeded, as already mentioned, in surprising the Dutch garrison in Karrak. At length his cruelties exasperated his followers, who rose against him, and he was compelled to fly to Bussorah, where he was seized and put to death. Corgo was occupied in 1838 by the British, at the same time that we landed a force at Karrak, and was also surveyed by Captain Goodfellow.

It is a somewhat singular fact that many European nations have at various times established themselves in the Persian Gulf. Not to speak of ourselves, there have been the Portuguese at Ormuz, Kishm, Bahrein, and other places; the Dutch at Karrak, and even the Danes once settled in Karrak, according to General Monteith, and had also a settlement at the port of Charrack, situated at the foot of Charrack Hill on the Persian coast. This high land, called by the Arabs Jebel Atraniah, the "Citron mountain," seems to be the Mount Ochus of the ancients, and from being a remarkably conspicuous object, it forms a sea-mark for the navigation of the Gulf. The town nestling at its base was once a good-sized place, judging of the great extent of its ruined walls, but at present its population scarce exceeds 2,000 souls. That Charrack was in former times possessed by the Danes,

is attested by the fact, vouched for by Buckingham, that the people residing there still have the light hair and blue eyes of their Scandinavian progenitors, though in their habits and language they resemble the aborigines of the country.

Opposite to this Charrack Hill, from which it is distant about ten miles, is the small island called Kenu by Horsborgh, though now better known as Keun. It is low and more thickly wooded than any of the islands in the Gulf, and is fruitful and well inhabited. Shelter for shipping from the prevalent north-west gales is found under its lee, and there is a good anchorage at its eastern end. It appears at one time to have been very populous, and, according to an interesting paper, communicated some years ago to the Bombay Geographical Society by Captain Constable of the Indian Navy, who surveyed a great portion of the Gulf, its kings ruled over all the islands in this inland sea. Ruins are still existing of very large buildings, and the reservoirs for water are beautifully built. One is subterranean, nearly half a mile long, with shafts sunk at every twenty yards to receive the rain water; there are no less than thirty-eight of these shafts. The reservoir is near the ruins of a great city, which flourished in the twelfth century, and carried on an extensive trade with China. Great mounds of broken bits of china, some of superior quality, are still to be seen. The soil of the island is very fertile, and supplies can be had here by passing ships; but the great need is water.

XI.

El Kateef and Grane: with an Historical Sketch of the Pirates of Ras-el-Khymah, and the Beni-Boo-Ali Arabs.

ON the Arabian side of the Persian Gulf, at the bottom of the Bay of Bahrein, about five or six hours' sail from that island, lies the creek and port of Laghere. In this creek, which is capacious, extending many miles inland, the boats employed in the pearl fishery are laid up during the winter, to the number of several hundred sail. This town of Laghere is considered as the port of Lahsa, a large Arab town, situated in the interior, about three days' journey by camels. The latter place is reckoned of some strength and importance.

According to Buckingham, during the expeditions of the Portuguese in these seas, Lahsa was the capital of a king to whom both the island of Bahrein and the neighbouring port of Kateef were subject; and an account is given in the

Portuguese histories of those times of an expedition from Ormuz against Bahrein, on account of the King of Lahsa having refused to pay tribute to them. Bahrein was taken by the combined arms of the Portuguese and Persians, and Antonio Correa, the leader of the former, added the title of Bahrein to his name. It is related that during the whole of the engagement, Reis Xarafo; or Asharoff, the Persian admiral, looked on from his vessel as though an unconcerned spectator; but when afterwards the body of the King, Mocrim by name (who was shot through the thigh, and did not die till six days afterwards), was taken over to Lahsa for interment, this cold-blooded and cowardly Persian went over to the town and cut off his head, which he sent to Ormuz. What seems scarcely less disgraceful is that Correa, the Portuguese commander, in memory of the share that he had taken in this work, was authorized to bear a king's head on his coat of arms, "which," says De Faria of Sousa, a Portuguese historian, "is still borne by his descendants."

Beyond Laghere, to the north-west of it, lies the town and port of El Kateef. It is a town having a large trade, and shares in the pearl fisheries and general commerce of Bahrein, though the governments are independent of each other. Kateef and the surrounding country is elevated little above the level of the sea, and but a few feet of a higher tide than ordinary would cover it up to the cliffs. Hence the coast is very unhealthy, and the vegetation rich and heavy; thick

groves of palm stretch in one continuous mass on the land side of the town. Here, spreading for a distance of five miles, are the remains of an old aqueduct which formerly supplied Kateef with better water than it now boasts.

The town is surrounded by walls and towers, but all are in a state of dilapidation. It has been by an acute observer described as "crowded, damp, and dirty, and has altogether a gloomy, which, for want of a better epithet, I would call a mouldy look." The only point of interest is the great castle of Kateef, the massive walls of which run down almost to the edge of the waveless, motionless sea, that looks at this point of the coast more than half morass and sedge; and those muddy waters, reminding one of the Thames at ebb tide, are so shallow that when the small brig-of-war to which I was attached lay off the town we had to bring-to several miles from the shore. On the narrow esplanade between the walls of the castle and the Gulf are ranged a few rusty guns of large calibre, and just in front of the main gate—a crumbling outwork, which a single cannon-shot would bring down to the ground—are displayed six pieces of honey-combed artillery. The castle walls are high and strong, and are built of mixed brick and mortar; the entrance has double doors, and is flanked with towers.

The Bay of Kateef is about twelve miles across, and, at the extremity of the two promontories enclosing it, are two fortresses; inside this great bay is a lesser one, in which the

castle stands, and where lie at anchor at the flood, and stranded at the ebb, the Arab trading vessels and the vessels of war of the potentate who rules as the Viceroy of the Sultan of Nejed, whose capital is at Hofhoof, a place minutely described by that eminent oriental traveller, Mr. Palgrave. This gentleman, speaking of the castle, assigns the sixth or seventh century after the Hijira as the probable period of its foundation; this he gathers from the style of the architecture being of a lighter and more elegant style than that of the third century, in which flourished Karmoot, whom tradition credits with its erection. The following is his description of a really remarkable building: "The outer enclosure is square and surrounded by high walls, under which we had lately passed on the outside, with lofty corner towers and a moat towards the land; the front is defended by the sea. At the south-western angle, the farthest from the entrance, stands the palace itself. In its present condition, partly thrown down and broken, partly clumsily patched up in later times, it were hard to make out the precise details of the original plan. First comes a large portico or arcade in the so-called Moresco style, supported on ranges of light columns, three arches in depth and five, if I remember right, in length, crowned by cross vaulting, and stuccoed over with Arabesque ornaments, now defaced. Hence admittance is given to what must have once been a long covered gallery, though it now shows only the side walls and pillars, with

here and there an abutment jutting out for a broken arch across it. By this we enter an inner court, round which are many apartments in a tolerable state of preservation, and on one side is the reception-hall, a long, large, and wide room, with handsome pillars. In the midst of windows in the Persian style, divided into compartments by little columns, at the farther end of the hall, is a raised dais, where once a monarch sat, and now a negro. Beyond and within is an inextricable labyrinth of chambers, galleries, closets, and passages, in a first, a second, and a third story. Here is a faltering staircase, there a door opening on vacancy. The windows, where they yet remain entire, are filled with a beautiful stone trellis, never the same in pattern throughout the whole range of the palace, and marking much ingenuity and taste. Lastly, a few yards beyond the reception-room or khanah, and on the ground level is what seems to have been a court for public audience, with large round columns, and vestiges of decoration much resembling that, yet common in Baghdad houses, where bas-relief takes the place of colours. This part of the building has been defaced into a Wahabee mosque, and has been wofully cut about to form a Mihrab, and the other arrangements of Mohammedan devotion. And this is all that time and war have spared of the old royal Carmathian residence."

The garrison of this huge fortress consists only of some two hundred and sixty soldiers, for little fear is there among

these Easterns of the importation, for purposes of trial, of such Parisian *articles de luxe* as revolutions or *coup d'état;* the people have been accustomed to grinding despotism for so many centuries, and are, moreover, far too indolent to rebel against their rulers, be they ever so heavily taxed and imposed upon. It is only by foreign invaders that the peace is broken, and bloodshed, except of course as regards the interminable feuds and private vendettas, the legality of which is recognized by Arab law, and sanctioned by public opinion as allowable, nay, binding on all those aggrieved. As a proof that the piratical proclivities of these Arabs are not dead, but only dormant, and would be active as in the evil days when their squadrons swept the Gulf and waged open battle with the armed cruisers of the Indian Navy, an instance may be cited, within the writer's cognizance, when the Arabs of Kateef committed an act of piracy, and would not yield up the buglah they had seized. It was in the year 1855, and two of the ships of the Persian Gulf squadron, one a corvette of twelve guns and the other a brigantine of five guns, were despatched to bring away the prize *vi et armis.* This was done by the boats of the small squadron, for so shallow was the water the vessels were unable to take part in the affair. The Arabs resisted pluckily enough, and the boats went in at them first with their guns, and then, as the Arabs opened a heavy fire with matchlocks and four pieces of cannon they brought to bear from the buglah, the order was given to board;

this was done in gallant style, though some half-dozen officers and sailors were wounded while clambering up the wall-like sides of the native craft.

The next port above Kateef of any note on this coast is Grane, as we call it, though it is known among Arabs as Koweit. It is a place of considerable importance, with a tolerably good roadstead, and is now the most important port of the Gulf, Bushire itself scarcely excepted. The town is large and populous, though the desert presses closely upon it. Grane is nominally under the sovereignty of the Turkish Pasha of Baghdad, but its Arab sheikh resolutely declines to pay tribute to the representative of the Ottoman, and hence, perhaps, the town has been spared from that decline which falls like a blight upon everything under the government of the Porte. Koweit appears always to have preserved its independence, and that, too, at a time when Ormuz, Muscat, Bahrein, Lahsa, and even Kateef and Bussorah (which two last were garrisoned by Turks), were assailed by Portuguese arms. At the present day its inhabitants bear the reputation of being the bravest and freest people throughout the Gulf, while the sailors hold the first rank in point of daring and skilful seamanship. During the period that despatches used to be transmitted to India by way of Baghdad, Grane was frequented by the Company's cruisers on account of the good anchorage, and its favourable situation for landing and waiting for such despatches; at

one time the Company's agent established at Bussorah quitted that place in consequence of some quarrel with the Turkish Government, and took up his temporary residence at Grane.

During the early part of the present century there existed in the Persian Gulf a tribe of Arabs called the Jowassami, who existed almost entirely on the fruits of a systematic course of piracy. According to Lieutenant Wellsted of the Indian Navy, the name of Jowassami was derived from Johasmi a Mohammedan saint, who first pitched his tent on the promontory where was built their chief port, called hence Ras-el-Khymah, or Cape Tent. They were very powerful, and were the terror of all the peaceably disposed inhabitants of the shores of that inland sea.

There were other smaller tribes of pirates inhabiting that part of the coast between a district called Belad Ser, near Cape Mussendom, at the entrance to the Persian Gulf, and the island of Bahrein, which has been named appropriately by all old navigators, the Pirate Coast. These smaller tribes, called the Mahama, Beni as, and the Menasir, were as cruel as their neighbours, the dreaded Jowassami, but were not numerically so strong. The latter dared to beard the Hon. East India Company, and as usual the great "Koompani Bahadoor" got the best of it. The Jowassami have long been completely humbled, and the Company's cruisers within the last twenty years, and until the final abolition of the Indian Navy, have

not encountered much difficulty in putting down with a firm hand all practices of a piratical nature. This tendency to pillage their neighbours' goods, and then to murder the unhappy proprietors, has existed from a somewhat remote antiquity, and, therefore, our interference in more modern times was, doubtless, regarded as an unwarrantable tampering with "vested interests." Chesney mentions, in his valuable work on his expedition to the Euphrates, that pirates existed in the fourth century of the Hijira; and, further, that an old Arab chronicler, Ibn Hankul by name, mentions that before the children of Israel were delivered from Egyptian bondage there were pirates in these ports, and that they had become so bold by uniform success that they carried on their depredations not only along the coasts, but even far out at sea. These sturdy sea-robbers resisted for a length of time the propagandism of the followers of Abd-ul-Wahab, the great reformer of the Mohammedan religion; but at length they were conquered by force of arms, and adopted the tenets of the Wahabees with all the fiery enthusiasm of converts. For further particulars regarding the history, government, and religion of this singular sect, I would refer the reader to Burçkhardt's "Notes on the Bedouins and Wahabees."

For a long time the Jowassami confined their attentions solely to capturing native vessels, and, according to their invariable custom on such occasions, gave the crew the option of forthwith conforming to their religion or suffering

a cruel death. But they grew bolder as years passed by. The East India Company always retained a squadron of their ships of war in the Persian Gulf, for the purpose of protecting their interests; and they had agents at Bushire and Bussorah, with which places, particularly the latter, a considerable trade was carried on. Notwithstanding that acts of piracy were committed under the eyes of the officers of the Indian Navy, the Honourable Court sitting in Leadenhall-street had, with great shortsightedness, issued instructions to the Government at Bombay, that they were not to molest the pirates in their depredations except in self-defence. The continuance of this impolitic course induced the Jowassami, who, like all Easterns, construed non-intervention into an avowal of weakness, to commit an act of treachery that brought its own punishment, and gave them their first lesson in the invincibility of the great power that was so soon to overshadow the East, and reduce to submission even their piratical strongholds.

About the year 1797, the Viper, a brig of war of ten guns, belonging to the Hon. East India Company, was lying in Bushire Roads; some Arab dhows belonging to the Jowassami were also anchored in the roadstead, but no fear of any hostile movement on the part of these vessels existed in the mind of the captain of the Viper, who was indeed on shore at the time, at the house of the government agent. This gentleman incautiously gave an order to the acting

commander of the Viper to supply the dhows with powder and shot, and no sooner had they secured enough for their purpose than they weighed anchor, as if for a cruise. It was about eight o'clock in the morning, and the crew of the Company's cruiser were having their breakfast on deck. Suddenly two of the dhows, which were passing under the Viper's stern, opened fire with round shot upon the little craft. The officers, who were below, rushed upon deck. Lieutenant Carruthers, the commanding-officer, called the men to quarters, and none too soon, for the dhows, crammed full of men, bore down on the man-of-war, intending to capture her by boarding. The crew of the Viper cut the cable and made sail on the ship, while the guns were cast loose, and the gallant tars replied to their cowardly assailants by a well-directed and hot fire. The superior seamanship of the Englishmen told in their favour, and by dint of smart manœuvring the young officer succeeded, not only in preventing them from carrying into execution their intention to board, when their numerical superiority must have given them the victory, but he beat the dhows off, and ended by chasing them out to sea. Unfortunately this gallant young officer was killed towards the latter part of the action. He had been previously wounded by a musket-ball in the loins, but girding a handkerchief round his waist he refused to leave the deck, and was soon after shot through the forehead. Mr. Latter, the senior midshipman, who took command on

the death of his superior, also fought the ship with determined bravery, and the great loss she incurred testified to the severity of the action.

For a few years this lesson in British pluck was not forgotten, but in 1807 a number of their boats attacked a cruiser of six guns called the Fury, employed in carrying despatches from Bussorah to Bombay. Her commander, Lieutenant Gowan, beat off his assailants after a protracted action, in which the pirates lost a great number of men, killed and wounded. For this act Lieutenant Gowan was not only not thanked by the Governor of Bombay, to whom he went to pay his respects on his arrival at that port, but he received a severe reprimand for disobeying the government orders, shortly before issued, to the effect that commanders of the Hon. East India Company's ships of war were not to molest the "innocent and unoffending" Arabs of the Persian Gulf.

As to the European mercantile marine, frequent instances occurred in which Arab dhows captured peaceful trading vessels, and put to death or held to ransom the unhappy crews. Buckingham, in his interesting work, "Travels in Assyria, Media, and Persia," enumerates several such cases. At last, owing to the fact that these repeated violations of the British flag remained unresented, the pirates of the Gulf again attempted to cope with the Company's ships of war. Some large buglahs, belonging to the Jowassami, attacked

the Mornington of 24 guns, and subsequently, the Teignmouth of 18 guns, but were soundly beaten on both occasions. About this time, the tribe, having greatly increased in the number and size of their vessels, were so greatly emboldened by success that, in 1808, they attempted to capture a large merchant ship, called the Minerva. For some two days the gallant crew kept up a running fight, but at length the pirates boarded in overpowering numbers, and carried the ship. An indiscriminate massacre then ensued, from which only two Europeans and a lady, the wife of Lieutenant Taylor of the Indian Navy, were exempted, while the captain, out of revenge, was put to a most cruel death, being cut into small pieces while alive. The captives were, in this instance, allowed to be ransomed after a lengthened confinement. Only a few weeks after this outrage, a fleet of piratical dhows attacked the Honourable Company's brig Sylph, a small craft of only some eighty tons, and carrying 8 guns. Her commanding-officer, Lieutenant Graham, divined their object when he saw them bearing down upon him in such force, but his hands were tied, for his orders from the Bombay Government were peremptory, not to open fire upon them until they commenced the action. Down came the dhows, and without firing a shot ran alongside the little craft, and poured an overwhelming mass of men on to her decks. All opposition on the part of the sailors was quickly overborne; those on deck were put to

the sword, while Lieutenant Graham fell down the fore hatchway covered with wounds. Some of his men, who had concealed themselves in a store-room in the bows of the ship, dragged their commander into their place of refuge. The pirates were now masters of the Sylph, and made sail on her in company with their boats. But fortunately, just at this moment, His Majesty's ship Nereid, a heavy frigate, hove in sight, and perceiving a brig surrounded by a number of pirate boats, suspected something was wrong, and gave chase. The robbers abandoned their prize, but did not escape without some punishment, as the Nereid sunk one of their buglahs with a broadside.

Within three days of this affair, another of the East India Company's cruisers, the Nautilus, of 14 guns, was passing the small island of Anjar, near Kishm, when she was attacked by a squadron of three large buglahs, carrying heavy guns, and a number of row boats, crammed full of men, which lay near the scene of action, in readiness to board as soon as the man-of-war's fire slackened. The Nautilus, commanded by Lieutenant Bennet, owing to the orders he had received in common with the other officers of the Indian Navy, was unable to open fire upon his assailants until they had fired the first shot, but they bore down upon him with such unmistakable hostile intent, one on each bow, and one on the quarter, that he decided to hazard dismissal from the service, and so, after firing a blank

cartridge across the bows of the largest, as an intimation to her to sheer off, he let them have a taste of his metal, and poured a broadside into them. A hot action ensued, which lasted more than an hour, but the Nautilus at length succeeded in driving off her assailants, with considerable loss, while her own casualty roll was comparatively light. So powerful had these Jowassami pirates become at sea, that they waged successful war against the Sultan of Muscat, and in 1805, the then Imaum, called Sultan Sayyid, was killed in a desperate naval engagement near Lingah, and his whole fleet was scattered.

At length the Indian public forced the Bombay Government to throw off the disgraceful supineness with which they had hitherto acted, and in 1809 a combined naval and military expedition was organized at Bombay, to punish these desperadoes, who dared thus openly to defy the British flag. The naval force consisted of the Chiffone, Commander Wainwright in command, the Caroline frigate, and the Honourable Company's ships Mornington, Ternate, Aurora, Prince of Wales, Nautilus, Fury, Ariel, and Vestal, with the Stromboli bomb-ketch, and four large transports, carrying troops. The latter consisted of His Majesty's 65th regiment, Colonel Smith, with the rank of Brigadier, in command of the forces, part of the 47th, a detachment of the Bombay Artillery, and about 1,000 Sepoys. The expedition sailed on the 4th of September, but scarcely had

the fleet left Bombay harbour, than the Stromboli, an old worn-out vessel, that had been pronounced, many years before, unseaworthy, sunk, and many lives were lost. Off Cape Mussendom they encountered and dispersed a fleet of twenty-seven buglahs. After knocking about many weeks at sea, the expedition arrived at Ras-el-Khymah, the chief town of the Jowassami, and the inhabitants were called upon to surrender. On their refusal, the troops were landed, but the fleet was unable to be of much assistance, owing to the shallowness of the water. After a desperate resistance on the part of its defenders, Ras-el-Khymah, which was found to be strongly fortified with batteries and regular entrenchments, was stormed, and then set on fire. About sixty large buglahs were captured in the port, together with the Minerva. Next day the troops were embarked, and no sooner had they vacated the town than it was reocupied by its late defenders. The expedition then proceeded to Leit, or Luft, on the northern shore of the island of Kishm, which was reduced, together with Lingah, on the same side of the Persian Gulf. The former stronghold having once belonged to the Imaum of Muscat, was delivered over to that potentate. In the first day's attack on Leit the troops met with something like a repulse, for on Colonel Smith attempting to storm the fort, which is described as a large and strong castle, with many batteries and redoubts, he was met by such a well-directed fire, and

the sharp-shooters of the enemy exhibited such accuracy of aim, that he was compelled to withdraw his men, and a howitzer that had been brought to the front, for the purpose of blowing open the gates, was abandoned. At daybreak the next morning, however, when the British troops were preparing to renew the attack, they were astonished to see the union-jack flying on the topmost walls of the castle. It seems that Lieutenant Hall of the Indian Navy, who had commanded the Stromboli when she sank, and who now commanded the Fury, one of the Company's cruisers, had gone ashore alone, and advancing to the castle gates with the union-jack, found the place abandoned. From Leit, or rather Lingah, the expedition sailed to several places, pirate haunts, from which the Jowassami carried on their depredations; these were razed to the ground, and all the dhows found were burnt. From thence they returned to Muscat, where all the ships rendezvoused. Reinforced by a body of 4,000 men from the Imaum's troops, they assisted in recapturing the castle of Shenaz on the coast, between Cape Mussendom and Muscat, a fort that had been taken from him by the Jowassami. The resistance the troops encountered at Shenaz was of a most desperate character. The Arabs defended the castle until it was reduced to a mass of ruins, and would have died there to a man, but that they were induced to surrender on the promise of their lives. The expedition having accomplished all the objects for which

it had been despatched to the Persian Gulf, returned to Bombay.

Notwithstanding the severe lesson the Jowassami had received in the destruction of their strongholds, and the burning of their fleet, they soon returned to their old ways. They rebuilt their towns, and quickly constructed a powerful navy. More than 100 large buglahs, some of 300 tons, were soon cruising about the Persian Gulf, destroying the commerce, and devastating the coast of that inland sea. The orders to the Indian Navy now were to sink, burn, and destroy every craft they encountered of these bold warriors, and the result was, that desperate actions were fought between the small cruisers and their heavily-armed adversaries. The officers and crews of the Indian Navy, I am proud to record, showed themselves on all occasions staunch defenders of the honour of our flag, and proved that their small service was not unworthy to be ranked as a scion of the noble Royal Navy of England. In 1815 the pirate craft extended their depredations to the entrance to the Red Sea, and in the following year a fleet of the Jowassami boats, under their commodore, Ameer Ibrahim, who was a kinsman of Hassan ben Rahama, captured, within sight of Mocha, four vessels carrying the British flag, whose crews they massacred. When this was known in Bombay, a squadron, consisting of His Majesty's ship Challenger, of 18 guns, and the Company's ships Ariel and Mercury, 14,

and Vestal, 12, were despatched to Ras-el-Khymah, to demand satisfaction. This was refused by Hassan ben Rahama, upon which the squadron burnt several dhows, and opened fire upon the town. Owing to the shoal water, which prevented the ships from lying sufficiently close to the batteries, the bombardment was ineffectual, and the squadron returned to Bombay without effecting much in the way of reducing the Jowassami. So matters remained for a time.

After the Indian Government had successfully concluded the operations against the Mahrattas, their attention was again directed to these irreclaimable freebooters, who had not only become the scourge of the whole sea-board from Aden to Bussorah and Bushire, but had even extended their depredations to the northern shores of India. And for every reason, both political and military, it was absolutely necessary that this nest of pirates should be exterminated, and this trade of piracy should once for all be abolished. Our prestige had suffered considerably by the inactivity of the Government. The squadron of cruisers was too small to cope efficiently with this evil, which had now assumed such gigantic proportions. Three or four ships could not be everywhere, and no sooner had they destroyed one large piratical dhow than another was at once launched of still greater tonnage. As to the supply of fighting men, it was practically without limit. It was computed that there were

at this time upwards of 100 large dhows and buglahs, manned by 8,000 warriors, cruising about the waters in the neighbourhood of Ras-el-Ḳhymah. All commerce was almost at standstill. Such European vessels as still traded in the Gulf went about under convoy of the Company's ships, while the trade that was carried on in native bottoms was practically annihilated. The pirates, encouraged by the comparative impunity they enjoyed, once more attempted the capture of some of the smaller cruisers, but were in every instance defeated with loss. They tried, on one occasion, to carry, by boarding, the Hon. Company's sloop-of-war Elphinstone of 18 guns (a ship in which I subsequently served for some years), but failed most egregiously. To effect their object two buglahs of the largest size bore down upon her, one on each bow, and having a stout hawser fastened between them, so that they might range alongside directly they struck her. The cruiser awaited their approach with double-shotted guns, and just as the pirates were about to board in a dense mass, fired both broadsides into them, and sank the buglahs, dealing terrible slaughter among the horde of pirates.

After exhibiting great patience and long-suffering, the Indian Government at length roused themselves; the great trading company's tenderest point was touched when their mercantile business with the Persian Gulf was all but annihilated. The Imaum of Muscat, an

ancient ally of the British, applied for assistance against the piratical tribes of the sea-board near his capital; the town of Ras-el-Khymah, their old head-quarters, had been rebuilt and fortified, and he was totally unable to make head against his ferocious enemies. At this time the wrath of the Sultan had been aroused against the entire sect of the Wahabees, and Ibrahim Pasha was ordered to march from Egypt to chastise the tribes of Oman. The British Government despatched Captain Sadler to the Egyptian head-quarters at Medina to secure their co-operation, but, on that officer's arrival, he found that the objects for which the campaign had been undertaken had been accomplished. Abdalla-bin-Saoud, the great Wahabi chief, had been captured; Deriah, their capital, had been stormed; and Ibrahim Pasha did not care to advance to the Persian Gulf.

The Bombay Government accordingly had to take the matter in hand alone. An expedition was fitted out, and sailed from Bombay, under the command of Sir William Grant Keir. It comprised 1,700 Europeans, consisting of H.M.'s 47th and 65th regiments, with one company of European Artillery, and 2,500 Sepoys. Captain Collier, of H.M.'s ship Liverpool, commanded the naval portion of the forces. The expedition sailed in September, 1819, and arrived off Ras-el-Khymah in December. The troops were landed, and, after some spirited fighting, in which 56 officers and men were killed and wounded, among the former being

Major Molesworth, advanced to the capital; batteries were erected, and a storming party told off, but during the night the Arabs deserted the place. After another strong fort, called Zaya, had been captured, the pirates came to terms, and a treaty was signed, in which they agreed to abstain in future from piracy, and from engaging in the slave traffic. The expedition, having effected its object, then returned to India. Captain Thompson* was appointed Political Resident at Ras-el-Khymah, but from that place he removed soon after to the island of Kishm, on the opposite coast, where a small military detachment was stationed.

Still piracy was bred in the bone among the seafaring tribes of the Persian Gulf, and Wellsted mentions that in 1835 the Hon. Company's sloop-of-war Elphinstone, the same I before mentioned, encountered a dhow, belonging to the Beni As, a tribe which had only a few days before plundered and seized an Indian vessel proceeding to Bushire. The Elphinstone, on sighting the dhow, gave chase, when the pirate calmly awaited her approach. Just as the Arabs were about to board, a broadside from the sloop's 32-pounder carronades sent her to the bottom, committing great havoc among the crew. The commander of the pirate, who was captured, was taken to India, tried there in the Supreme Court, and sentenced to fourteen years' transportation. As Mr. Wellsted remarks, the first part of this affair was intelli-

* The late General Perronet Thompson.

gible enough to these lawless robbers, and there never was a repetition by any of them of such an attempt, but they could not understand what the fourteen years' transportation meant. And here may be said to terminate the History of the Pirates of the Persian Gulf, that is, as a power defying the might of England in actual war. Nevertheless, at times the old plundering and murdering spirit broke out, and isolated instances occurred of some stubborn chief, mindful of the by-gone glories of the days of his youth, betaking himself to his old occupation. Indeed, we have already narrated how, in 1855, they captured a large Arab trading vessel and took her to El Kateef, adjoining the island of Bahrein, and the boats of two of the Company's cruisers that were sent to cut her out had to fight a sharp action, and sustained some loss, before they succeeded in dislodging the enemy from the buglah. The Jowassami and the other pirate tribes have found out ere this that as a mode of gaining their livelihood it is simply "a bad speculation"; to use a mercantile phrase, "it does not pay," for every chieftain who launches his barque, and dares to measure swords with the irresistible Feringhees, comes to signal grief. All Arabs are true fatalists, and it has been made manifest to them that it is combating against an inexorable fate, and so gradually cases of piracy have grown less frequent.

Within only a few months of the downfall of the Jowassami the piratical predilection of the Arab tribes near Ras-

el-Had—a promontory that stretches out into the Indian Ocean, to the south-eastward of Ras Mussendom—gave rise to two hostile expeditions on the part of the Bombay Government. The first of these was almost annihilated; but the second took a terrible revenge, and in turn nearly exterminated the entire nationality. The "Beni-Boo-Ali," or more properly, "Beni-Abu-Ali," to whom I am referring, are an ancient tribe of Bedouins, and are supposed by Forster, in his learned work, "The Geography of Arabia," to be indentical with the Blenlai, a tribe mentioned by Pliny. Some restless spirits among them captured an Indian trading vessel, and a Company's cruiser was despatched to inquire into the circumstances. Owing to the surf being high on the beach, the pilot, an Arab, offered to swim ashore and communicate with the chiefs. This man was immediately killed on landing, and the boats were fired upon. The man-of-war returned to Kishm, where Captain Thompson, the Political Resident, was located, with some 800 troops left behind by Sir W. Grant Keir. Captain Thompson forthwith started off, with six companies of Sepoys and six guns, for Sur, near Ras-el-Had, where he landed. Here he formed a junction with 1,000 men, commanded by the Imaum of Muscat, Sayyid Said, in person. The Bedouins retreated before them from the sea coast, until they reached the neighbourhood of their chief station. As the troops were marching round a grove of date trees the whole tribe fell upon them,

uttering the most terrible yells. Before the Sepoys could be formed, the Bedouins broke into the ranks, and, sweeping like a cataract through the panic-stricken soldiers, utterly scattered them. In vain the officers tried by word and example to rally their men; the Arabs struck down the bayonets and with their long straight broadswords, much resembling those of the Crusaders, the fanatical Wahabees almost exterminated their foes. Six officers and 400 Sepoys were killed, and the whole force would have been destroyed but for the distinguished gallantry of the Imaum, who, though himself severely wounded, showed a bold front to the victorious foe, and effected an orderly retreat to the coast. The Arabs gave no quarter to the wounded, and even dragged out of his palanquin the surgeon who was sick, and butchered him on the spot. Of the British force only Captain Thompson, two officers, and 150 men found shelter behind the walls of Muscat.

As soon as news of this disaster reached Bombay the Indian Government took immediate steps to retrieve the tarnished lustre of the British arms. In January, 1821, General Sir Lionel Smith, the same officer who commanded the troops in the expedition against the Jowassami pirates in 1809, sailed from Bombay, reaching Sur in the following month. His force consisted of 3,000 men, but the Beni-Abu-Ali, who only mustered some 800 warriors, were nowise daunted by this disparity of force, for hardly had the soldiers

encamped than the Arabs made a *chupao*, or night attack, in which they inflicted some loss on our troops. When the expeditionary army had nearly reached their chief fort the enemy met them on a spacious plain, and a pitched battle ensued. The Beni-Abu-Ali fought with a desperate valour that astonished the veteran officers who had been engaged in the recent campaign against the Mahrattas. With their swords they strove to find a weak point in the serried ranks; with yells that filled the air, and impelled by all the fanaticism of a religion that taught them that death in the face of an enemy was a sure passport to the bliss of Paradise, they threw themselves on the bayonets of the soldiery, and with reckless impetuosity tried to break into the death-dealing squares. Everywhere they encountered only cold steel and withering volleys, and at length were fain to retire, leaving dead on the field nearly the whole of the tribe. The fort was then cannonaded, and surrendered; and so ended this little war. Among those desperately wounded and taken prisoners was their chief, who, with many of the male survivors, was sent as a prisoner to Bombay. Here they were detained for two years, and were then sent back to their native country, with presents and money to rebuild their town. The tribe received a blow from which they have never recovered; though it speaks highly for their generosity of feeling, that when Lieut. Wellsted visited that part of Oman, in 1835, they received him with open arms, and treated him most hospitably; they

also conversed with him freely on the subject of their defeat, entertaining no animosity against us, though they could not forgive the part taken by the Imaum.

There is but too much reason to believe that the first expedition against these Beni-Abu-Ali, ought never to have been undertaken, but that it was a concession on the part of Captain Thompson to the interests of the Imaum of Muscat not warranted by his instructions from the Bombay Government. However, the murder of the pilot was indefensible, and our prestige clearly required the subsequent chastisement of the victorious Arabs.

The only way to keep these lawless tribes in subjection, and make them in some measure decent members of the Eastern body politic, is to put them down and keep them down with a high hand: they understand the logic of powder and shot, but laugh to scorn treaties, or entreaties; and as to protests, or instruments of like character known to European diplomacy, the only instrument they respect is a good cutlas or boarding pike. There can be little doubt, as has already been shown, that were the small squadron of ships of war now stationed in the Persian Gulf withdrawn, that even in this year of grace the evil spirit of piracy would rear its head again in those distant seas; though, thanks to steam and almost in an equal degree to the magnificent surveys of all the creeks and inlets of the "pirate coast," made by officers of the late Indian Navy, the demon could be exorcised in a

much more summary manner than in the "good old times" of which I have been writing.

The chief port of Ras-el-Khymah is now Abothubee, a place of some trade. The town is on a low and desert coast, opposite an island of the same name, and is now in the territory of Oman, nominally under the Sultan of Muscat, though the struggle for power and very existence between Azan-ben-Ghes and the fanatical Wahabees is still in progress, and it is impossible to foretell the result.

The chief place within that part of Oman situated within the confines of the Gulf is Shargah. It is surrounded by walls of stone, which are broken and ruined everywhere, and could be of no avail even against a force without artillery. Beyond the walls extends a plain of sand, which is again bounded by groves of dwarf palm, interspersed with gardens and huts. Within the town is a tower with a castle adjoining. For an Arab town, Shargah is large and flourishing, and the shops are numerous and well kept, reminding one of those in India, while the population have a comfortable and well-to-do air about them. And now my survey of places of interest on the coasts of the Persian Gulf is completed.

Though at the time of my cruises in its waters, and sojournings in neighbouring lands, I often felt a longing for the widely different scenes of my own native country, yet now, when I look back to the far past, and those strange people and their hospitable, often undesirable, yet never

commonplace customs, and dwell on the country and its associations, which are all glorified with that peculiar charm that is ever thrown around the scenes of our youth by the retrospect of later years,—at such times it is a subject of regret to me that I can never more revisit these places, reminiscences of which oftentimes recur to my mind, as do the dreams of night to one on awakening from slumber. The East, in spite of much squalid misery and abject ignorance, must ever be, with its climate, its romantic history, its poetic associations, and ancient races, a place of interest to any one gifted with one particle of imagination.

XII.

Bussorah, Ancient and Modern; with some account of Ahwaz.

THE names of the cities on the banks of the Tigris have a magic sound to the ear alike of young and old. Who cannot recall the happy days of childhood, when we used to read, nay, devour the "Thousand and One Nights," and long for the time to come when, having gained man's estate, we could cut the tie that bound us to the maternal apron-strings, or to the school desk, and explore for ourselves the fair field of adventure, or dive into the deep mine of "barbaric gold," which annually lures Eastward thousands of young and bold hearts from this little island of ours, many of them, alas! to find in those distant climes an early grave instead of fame and wealth. India, while held by the "taut" hand of military domination, will furnish no lack of fields on which stout hands, guided by brave hearts, can carve out a name. We could wish that the teeming population of Hindostan may be held in subjection without the aid of

large standing armies, but that can hardly ever be while its soil is occupied by a foreign race. Every Englishman will pray that the day may be far distant when the sword will be stricken from out the grasp of the Anglo-Saxon race in that distant dependency, for that day will be the speedy precursor of the decay and downfall of the empire of Britain.

Speaking of an Indian career as a money-making one, I am afraid that day has gone by; too many and too strong have been the pulls at the "pagoda tree" during the last thirty years, and now the once auriferous foliage of that unique specimen of the vegetable kingdom has ceased to yield ought but a bare competency to its devotees. The times which Thackeray describes so vividly with his humorous pen, the days of the retired civilian or Indian nabob, with his purse distended with rupees and "gold mohurs," and his liver no less enlarged with the combined effect of "curry bât" and the irascibility induced by unlimited authority, no longer exist. The nabob has passed into the limbo of things which once were, but are no more; with him, "peace to his manes!" is gone the long banker's account, to give place to, at best, a moderate independence, while the good man has left behind him, as a legacy, that unfortunate tendency to "hepatitis," in an acute form.

But India, after all, is only a small part of the East, and I think by no means the most interesting. The classic land in that vast continent is, to my mind, that part of Central

Asia which is enclosed by the rivers Euphrates and Tigris, to wit, Mesopotamia. The country known as ancient Chaldæa in the time of Ptolemy, and of which Mesopotamia forms a part, embraced that portion of the Asiatic continent, extending from the western limits of Persia to the shores of the Persian Gulf, and along both sides of the Shatt-ul-Arab. The powerful nation of the Chaldæans did not long exist, however, but was broken up into separate states, and the appellation Chaldæa was confined to one particular district at the south-western extremity of the once mighty empire.

The brig on board of which I happened to be was despatched from Bushire up the river Shatt-ul-Arab, as the noble stream into which the Tigris and Euphrates debouch is called, to take despatches from the Bombay Government to the Political Agent, or Consul, at Marghill, a small place situated a few miles from Bussorah. The brig, from the fact of her drawing less water than the full-rigged ships of the Persian Gulf squadron, was selected for the duty, and we were all in high glee at the prospect of having good opportunities of "bagging" feathered game, as well as enjoying the more exciting sport of pig-shooting.

Busrah, or Basrah, or Bosairah, as it is indiscriminately styled, is situated on the banks of the Shatt-ul-Arab, or "river of the Arabs." Dr. Vincent, in his valuable work, "The Commerce of the Ancients," states that the word signifies "stony or rough ground"; and this etymology seems to be

correct, for there is a Bozra mentioned in the Scripture which was situated in a rocky country.

The Euphrates and Tigris form a junction about forty miles above Bussorah, at a place called Koorna, and in the angle formed by the confluence of these rivers the Garden of Eden is said by tradition to be situated.

Bussorah, like most eastern cities, is surrounded by a wall, the compass of which is probably not less than a dozen miles. It existed as a considerable place less than 300 years ago, for a traveller, Rauwolff, in 1574, speaks of its importance, though at that time it was not in its prime. He says that twenty-five great ships arrived at Balsora, whilst he was at Baghdad. These vessels came over the sea from the Indies by way of Ormuz. From Balsora the goods were transhipped into small boats, and so brought to Baghdad. The merchants at either city used to keep pigeons, so that in case of necessity these birds might be sent to and fro with letters. The discovery of the Cape of Good Hope has tended more than anything else to bring the city to its present state of decay. The trade which passed through Bussorah to India and Cathay has now found other channels, and the place which was once important as the emporium of the commerce of the eastern and western world has never recovered the transfer. Bussorah may still be considered, as far as its trade, population, and political importance is concerned, the second city in the Pashalik of Bahgdad, that

city of course taking the first rank. The trade between these two places is carried on partly by means of that grand highway provided by nature, the stream which washes the walls of both cities; but the greater part of the traffic is conveyed by caravans, which are frequent and sometimes of immense magnitude. The walls of Bussorah are built of sun-dried bricks, and are of great strength and thickness. There are embrasures along them at intervals for cannon, but few pieces of ordnance are mounted. There are only about 5,000 inhabited houses in Bussorah; thirty years ago there were considerably more.

Below the city the majestic Shatt-ul-Arab, which takes a sweep to the eastward, is more than 700 yards wide, and deep enough in the mid channel to float a line-of-battle ship. After the river passes Bussorah it washes the formidable earthworks of Mohamrah, which, my readers will recall to mind, the combined British military and naval forces under Sir James Outram, early in 1857, carried after a heavy bombardment from the ships of war. Mohamrah is some eighty miles from Bussorah, and here, where the Shatt-ul-Arab assumes an average width of nearly a mile, the swollen and turbid stream is joined by another tributary, the Karun. During the remainder of its course to the sea, a distance of about forty miles from Mohamrah, it passes many large villages and almost continuous belts of date-groves. To return to Bussorah.

Two friends and myself left the brig, in a native boat, the morning after our arrival, and were pulled down with the ebb tide by a couple of native boatmen, who used paddles, which they plied with great quickness and dexterity. We were not long in reaching the mouth of the large canal which affords a means of communication with the city. When we landed, and strolled through the modern town, we found it but a skeleton to what it once was. There are few houses, and the place has a desolate, out-at-elbows look. The only good habitations are the old ones, but these are crumbling to pieces for want of repair, and nearly half of them are untenanted. Even the minarets look in a dangerous state of disrepair, while the streets are, during the greater part of the day, desolate and cheerless. The population, which early in the present century was said to number 100,000, can now barely exceed one-fifth that estimate. Travellers who visited it some 150 years ago have left on record that there were half a million of inhabitants in the place, but the plague broke out in the city, carrying off 300,000 people, and the effects of this dreadful visitation Bussorah has never recovered. A brighter day may yet dawn on the ill-fated city, for there can be little doubt that the great Euphrates valley is the natural path of communication to our Indian dominions, and that revivifier, the railway, would work wonders for this benighted land.

There are five gates in the walls; these are built in the

nature of fortalices, but, like all the other buildings, are almost in ruins, and could hardly keep out the desert Arabs, whose incursions they are intended to restrain. Scarce one-third of the space within the walls is inhabited, and the ground once occupied by a flourishing town is now cultivated, and is laid out in date-groves, gardens, and rice-fields. Only some of the more pretentious buildings are built of kiln-dried bricks, such as the principal mosques, and the palace of the Mutesellim, as is termed the Lieutenant-Governor under the orders of the Pasha of Baghdad,—who, by the way, may be literally described as a "big-wig," seeing that he is a pasha of "three tails." There are three principal canals, which supply the people with water for domestic purposes, irrigate the fields under cultivation, and are much used for transporting passengers and goods from the river to the Bazaar of the town, which being centrally situated is some distance from the banks of the Shatt-ul-Arab.

The boats, or canoes, used for carrying passengers are called "bellems," and are impelled along by means of long poles in the hands of two boatmen, who stand in the bows and stern of the small craft. The bellems are flat bottomed, and consequently draw only a few inches of water, so that they can be used even at dead-low water, when the canals are left almost dry. It is surprising to see the rate at which the boatmen push these canoes along, and they can keep up with a four-oared boat. For the goods

traffic considerably larger vessels are employed, but only at high water.

The handsomest building in Bussorah was the old British Factory, where some forty years ago the Political Agent took up his residence. It presents from the exterior the appearance of a fort, and was capable of defence. There was always stationed here a strong party of the Marine Battalion of the Bombay Army, under the command of a jemadar or native lieutenant; but on the factory being given up,—and that was when the Hon. East India Company ceased to be a trading corporation and confined itself exclusively to the business of governing the vast empire which owned its sway,—the marines were no longer required, and the British Vice-Consul, still in the pay of the Company, moved his quarters to Marghill, a village about four miles higher up, and situated on the banks of the river. Here, within 100 yards of a bunder or quay, a Residency was constructed, and many pleasant hours has the writer of this paper passed in that building, thanks to the hospitality of the late occupant.

There is a great mixture of races in Bussorah. Here you will find resident Arabs, Persians, Jews, of course natives of India, Koords from Kurdistan, Catholic Christians, and, last of all, though first in power and authority, as representing the ruling element, a handful of Turks; the Lieutenant-Governor, or Mutesellim, is of the last-mentioned race. The

Armenians, though numerically small, are decidedly the most industrious and wealthy, unless we except the merchants. These latter consist of the Banians, and come from Bengal; they are, of course, Hindoos, though, I believe, not very strict in their observance of religious requirements. Early in the present century the Turkish naval force, under the orders of the Governor of Bussorah, consisted of a fine squadron of some twenty sail, but when I visited the place there were only a few wretched craft, ill-manned and worse found, to represent the naval power of the Sublime Porte; a British 10-gun brig could have destroyed in as many minutes as she carried ordnance, the crazy vessels ostensibly intended to keep the Persian Gulf clear of pirates, which have always been a scourge in those waters. These *men-of war* had never been to sea, but lay "grounding on their beef bones" off the town. In fact, the political and military power of the crescent is everywhere waning in the East, and it would not need the prowess of a Genghis Khan to wrest the sceptre of empire from the feeble grasp of the miserable debauchees, who, as pashas, have governed, or rather misgoverned, those fair satrapies for so many years. All the country around Bussorah, though capable of cultivation in European hands, is an arid desert, and so it extends, almost without a break, to the very borders of Syria.

The river frequently overflows the country around Bussorah, and the passage to Zobeir, a town situated inland and about

eight miles distant, is frequently made in boats. The climate of Bussorah is neither so hot nor so unhealthy as Baghdad, but in the autumn fevers are very prevalent, and often fatal to Europeans. This sickness in a great measure owes its existence to the unutterably filthy state in which the streets are allowed to remain, a state of dirt even remarkable for an Eastern town; indeed we cannot employ language strong enough wherewith to characterize the total disregard of the most pressing requirements of sanitary science; garbage and refuse of all kinds are suffered to rot and fester in the most busy thoroughfares, generating malaria and breeding diseases of all kinds. What would Coleridge, who spoke of seventy distinct smells in Cologne, have said of Bussorah! Having visited the Bazaar, the only place which showed signs of commercial life, inspected from without the tottering minarets, and walked across some of the bridges spanning the central canal, which is by far the largest, we hired some horses, and rode out to visit the site of ancient Balsora.

After a ride of about five miles from the walls, we found ourselves in the midst of vast ruins, extensive enough, indeed, to be the remains of many great cities. There is little to strike the eye in all this chaos of debris, but the tombs of Talha and Gobei, two great generals who fell in battle here ages ago. These tombs are much visited by devout Mohammedans. Balsora, in the time of Ptolemy, when it existed as a great city, was called Palicopas, and the

ruins, which stretch in an unbroken line for nearly ten miles, attest the grandeur once attained by it. The canals, although without exception in decay, speak more eloquently perhaps than anything else of the immense resources and riches of ancient Chaldæa. Some of the embankments are eighty feet broad at their base, and the same in height, but the canals themselves, through neglect, have long since been choked up and become useless. We dismounted from our horses, and wandered about through interminable masses of broken masonry, until the eye revolted at the sameness, and the spirits became depressed with the magnitude of the ruins.

Truly the "abomination of desolation" is here. Occasionally, perhaps, a stray party of Bedouins, the wild children of the desert, who live in the wastes surrounding these cities, camp upon the accursed spot, and the picturesqueness of their costumes, so exactly similar to those of their ancestors in the days of Moses, the strange, weird-like effect of their watch fires, as their light casts gigantic shadows on the plain, and make the forms of men assume the proportions of Titans, the waste of broken columns and façades, lit up one moment by the glare, only in the next to be thrown into gloom, all these effects impress the mind with a sense of awe and sadness. The sublimity of the ruins brings home a lesson to the thoughtless which the homilies of the most eloquent of preachers might fail to

convey. Look around you, there is the text. It is not that generations have died and been succeeded by others—this we all expect in the course of nature; it is not that kingdoms have been overthrown,—this also, as history teaches us, is only a question of time; but the lesson it inculcates is the singular fact that cities almost as vast as London have left scarce a wreck behind; for, literally, hardly one stone remains upon another in the ruins of ancient Balsora. In this complete destruction of one of the cities of Chaldæa the denunciations of the prophet Isaiah have been completely verified: "It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation; neither shall the Arabian pitch his tent there, neither shall the shepherds make their folds there. But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there, and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there." When the greatest of the prophets predicted that not even the shepherds should make their folds in the ruined city, he conveyed in terms than which nothing could be more emphatic, the overwhelming destruction that would overtake her "pleasant palaces," for in these countries ruins are much used by shepherds for sheltering their flocks from the heat of the day and the dews of night. Babylon, "the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldee's excellency," was to be left to utter solitude, and to be the habitation of wild beasts and dragons. So is it to this day.

With equal force do these words apply to Balsora. From the desert, the more modern town of Bussorah presents an imposing appearance; but its beauty is deceptive, and is the beauty of a whited sepulchre. The light and elegant domes, and the tall minarets springing up sharp and well defined in the clear light of evening, look like fairy edifices; while surrounding them, and visible a considerable height above the walls and houses, are seen the stately palm trees, with their beautiful feathery foliage. It was quite dark when, with a last look at the scene around us, we remounted our horses, and were not sorry to commence the return journey to our boat on the river's bank, and from thence to our ship. We did not get on board till near midnight, and were all thoroughly fatigued; but naval rules are inexorable, and I had to keep the middle watch from twelve till four in the morning. However, I considered myself amply repaid for my trouble by the interesting nature of the ruins I had inspected, and managed to pass my four hours' vigil in ruminating over the evidences of departed greatness, of which Mesopotamia and the adjacent lands are so prolific.

The Porte maintains a semblance of a navy at other points of the Shatt-ul-Arab, besides Bussorah, and also a heterogeneous squadron of five or six small vessels on the Euphrates and Tigris, all of which, it need scarcely be added, are totally unseaworthy. It was different during the time of Suliman, Pasha of Baghdad, when the fleet of twenty

well armed and manned ships of war were strong enough to venture into the Persian Gulf, and engage the pirate craft that thronged its waters.

Groves of date trees grow along the banks of the Shatt-ul-Arab, but the country around Bussorah is a dreary waste, and there is no verdure to relieve the monotonous sameness of the prospect. For about six months of the year this tract, level as the sea, is inundated from the overflowing of the river, and the water almost washes the walls of Bussorah.

The following is a short summary of an historical sketch of Bussorah, chiefly from the pen of a learned Arab, who compiled it in the year of our Lord 1667, being the year of the Hegira 1078, shortly after its capture by the Turks (of which he was an eye-witness), and seven years subsequent to the forming of the first English factory.

The ancient city, originally known as Balsora, was built in the age of Oman-ebn-ul-Khattab, about 635 of the Christian era, though by some it is attributed to the Roman emperor Trajan, who reigned 500 years previous to that date. It occupied the site of the modern town of Zobeir; one of the most interesting of the ancient edifices is a small mosque covered with glazed tiles, containing the tomb of Zobeir, the Arab chief from whom the neighbouring town derives its name. Zobeir was one of the earliest followers of Mahomet, and was slain at the battle of the Camel, fought near

this place, an action memorable in Moslem annals as that in which the arms of the "faithful" were first stained with civil blood.

About a mile west of Zobeir is to be found the remains of the musjid or mosque of Ali, the nephew of Mahomet, not of Ali the Barmecide, as is stated by Keppel and other oriental travellers. The traces of the canal of Obillah, the Apologus of Arrian and Nearchus, may yet be traced from the Euphrates almost to the vicinity of Zobeir. Bussorah was taken in the reign of Sultan Soleiman from the Arabs in the year of the Hejira 935. Sultan Mohammed, son of Morad, whose rule commenced A.H. 1002, reigned nine years, and during his sovereignty the famous warrior and administrator, Afrasiab, governed Bussorah.

This Afrasiab came from Dair, a town north-west of Bussorah, chiefly remarkable, according to Captain Robert Mignan, for a tower of colossal dimensions and beautiful structure. He was originally a writer in the office of military accounts in the town he subsequently governed. The inhabitants having united to expel their Turkish Pasha Ali, the latter, finding his revenues daily decreasing, and with them the resources for maintaining his garrison, sold the government to Afrasiab for a sum of money.

His government was just and generous. He reduced the territory of Goban, then held by a Turk, also that of Duraq, as well as Hawizah, a town in Khusistan, the ancient

Susiana. After capturing the provinces on the left bank of the Euphrates, that had formerly been dependent on Bussorah, he refused the future payment of a tribute hitherto remitted to the Persians. His power lasted seven years, and he died A.H. 1012.

Afrasiab was succeeded by his son Ali Pasha, who encouraged learned men, and was a just administrator of the laws. His court might with justice be compared to that of Haroun-al-Raschid, and he was equally distinguished for his military talents, having successfully resisted the armies of the Sultan, and wrested some forts from his lieutenant, the Pasha of Baghdad.

A large army was at length sent against him by the great Persian king Shah Abbas, under the command of Emaum Kooli Khan, the same general who captured Ormuz from the Portuguese. The inhabitants of Bussorah, inspired with patriotism and a love for their sovereign, bravely resisted the Persian arms till the intelligence of the death of Abbas reached the enemy's camp, when they retreated, abandoning a vast amount of guns, baggage, and stores.

Ali Pasha reigned forty-five years, and was succeeded by his son Hussein Pasha, whose violence and injustice very soon estranged the affections of his people, and encouraged his uncles, the sons of Afrasiab, Ahmed Agha and Fathhi Beg, to revolt. They proceeded to Constantinople, and procured an order from their nominal suzerain for the disposal

of Hussein and their own elevation in his stead. Murteza Pasha of Baghdad accompanied them with a large army.

On hearing of their approach Hussein convened his chief men in consultation, but finding that they were not inclined to support him, he fled from the city with his family and a few faithful retainers. In the meantime the Turkish army entered Bussorah, and then the Pasha, pleased with the place, treacherously put to death the two sons of Afrasiab, and seized the reins of government. This conduct so incensed the people that they rose in rebellion against Murteza, and obliged him to fly, with those of his suite and soldiers that escaped their vengeance. Now also the inhabitants repented of having expelled Hussein, and brought him back to reign over them, A.H. 1064.

But this prince had not learnt moderation from his misfortunes, and increased his oppression of his subjects, though at the same time he liberally patronized literature and the fine arts. Nine years after his reinstatement he entered on a war of oppression against Lahsa, a place already spoken of as situated about three days' journey from El Kateef on the shores of the Persian Gulf. This he captured, and put a large number of its inhabitants to the sword, but his unprovoked outrages drew down upon him the anger of the Sultan, who at the instigation of Mohammed Pasha, son of Ali Pasha, despatched an army under Ibrahim Pasha of Baghdad. On hearing of the approach of this vast force

Hussein adopted every means of defence; he added to and strengthened the fortifications, and directed all non-combatants to leave the city; a portion of the citizens complied with the demands of the tyrant, but the remainder evinced a disposition to resist the mandate.[1] Upon this Hussein issued a proclamation to the effect that the life and property of any individual found in the city on the fourth day should be forfeited. A scene of the direst confusion and misery ensued. It is related by the learned Arab who was an eye-witness of the Exodus: "The ties of nature appeared dissolved: father, son, brother, and husband deserted those dearest to them, and fled for individual safety. The people poured forth in such multitudes as to impede the common passage; the sufferings of women, who now, for the first time, appeared unveiled, thinking only of their children, were indescribable. Some were so heavily laden that both mother and infant perished on the road." To aggravate the horrors of the scene, the bridges were destroyed by the deluge of rain. During the flight many of them endeavoured to save themselves on frail rafts of reed, and the canal and rivers were with the dead. At length, on the fourth morning, solitude and silence reigned in the once crowded streets and bazaars; the coffee-houses, mosques, and places of public assembly were deserted, and Hussein's power was once more established in Bussorah. He sternly continued his Muscovite plan of retarding the advance of the enemy, by rendering the

country a desert, and cleared the western bank of the river as far as the sea of its inhabitants, who were plundered and treated with every species of indignity. The same system of depopulation was pursued to the district of the Shimal, extending to the north-west of Bussorah, and then he awaited in his stronghold the advance of Ibrahim Pasha and his host. In the year of the Hegira 1076, the Turkish general laid siege to Koorna with an army of 50,000 men, but the city withstood his efforts for a period of three months, and pacific arrangements were entered into. In the meantime, Hussein had successfully coped with a rebellion headed by a powerful family of Bussorah, and put the head of the party to death; and on Ibrahim Pasha proposing terms of peace, he delegated his chief minister to accompany him to Constantinople, to procure an imperial rescript in his favour. Instead, of advancing his master's interests, this perfidious minister, the same who had counselled the expedition against Lahsa, procured his own nomination to the government of Bussorah, and returned with 80,000 fresh troops, commanded by Ibrahim, to make good his usurpation. A great battle ensued near Koorna, in which Hussein was completely defeated. He fled from the field, and took refuge in the fort of the same name, which had been prepared to stand a siege. It was formed of three concentric fortifications, built of mud, with a considerable clear space intervening between the successive cinctures; the river washed it on two

sides, and on the third, a deep ditch filled from the united streams. Though it was deemed impregnable, and Hussein attempted all that the crisis demanded and his acknowledged great military talents supplied, yet, after a long and vigorous siege, he was compelled to fly with the disorganized remnant of his army.

Soon afterwards, the Turks took possession of the city of Bussorah, and from the morning till the noon of that day put to death 4,000 individuals, in revenge for the massacre of Lahsa. Thus, in the year A.D. 1667, being of the Hegira 1078, Bussorah fell into the hands of its present possessors.

As to Hussein, he proceeded to Shiraz, to Suleiman king of Persia, with a view to seeking his interference on his behalf; but being unsuccessful, he journeyed to India with his son Ali Beg, and taking service in the army of the Emperor of that country, fell in battle.

In 1777 Bussorah was taken by a Persian force under Sadick Khan, after a lengthened siege of eight months, but in the following year fell again into the hands of the Turks, who in turn were deprived of it by the Sheikh of the Montafik Arabs. In the ensuing October the city was recovered by Soleiman Pasha, who encountered the Sheikh on the banks of the Euphrates and put him to flight; and it has ever since remained in the hands of the Turks.

Not far from Bussorah, and situated on the river Karoon,

or Karun, is the town of Ahwaz, a place remarkable as the scene of one of the most brilliant exploits of the brief but successful Persian war of 1856-57.

The great English people exist in a chronic state of "hot water." We are everlastingly engaged in some "little war"; and no sooner has a gigantic struggle, such as the Crimean war or Indian mutiny, been successfully closed, than the nation finds itself embroiled with some distant savage race or another, in some outlandish quarter of the globe, the exact position of which on the map would, perhaps, puzzle many a learned aspirant for honours at the universities, who could, notwithstanding, discourse profoundly on the "differential calculus," or deduce to your satisfaction the weak points in the "Principia." It is true, it may be asserted at the opening of Parliament that the country is "at peace with all the world"; but we are such a mighty nation that it seems of small account to our rulers that a steady drain in the matter of soldiers and sailors—that is, flesh and blood—is going on ceaselessly. Now, it is a Caffre war; now, a campaign in Abyssinia; now, a war with the Maories in New Zealand, who are unconsciously, poor wretches, fulfilling the destiny of aborigines, which I take to be undergoing the operation of being civilized—off the face of the earth.

A short account of the very remarkable ruins to be seen on the site of the once celebrated city of Ahwaz will very well preface a record of the British gallantry, for which it

will be ever famous in the memory of those who took part in the decisive campaign that immediately preceded the great drama of the Indian Mutiny, and the fame of which has been overshadowed by the glories of the latter famous struggle.

Ahwaz is situated 92 miles north-east of Bussorah in the province of Khuzistan, the ancient Susiana, mentioned by Arrian in his account of Alexander's march. The whole of the country intervening between Bussorah and Ahwaz is a flat monotonous waste, abandoned to hordes of wild and rapacious Arabs. Of the date of the founding of the ancient city there is no record, but the zenith of its prosperity was attained under the earlier caliphs of the Abassides, nor did it long survive their fall. Abulfeda, the Arabian geographer, says that the river Karoon was in his day covered with gardens and extensive plantations of sugar-cane and other valuable productions. On the city of Ahwaz revolting against the monarchs of the house of Abbas, the inhabitants were swept away in great numbers by the chances of war, and, after the triumph of the caliphs, the city was suffered to fall into decay, until at length it was abandoned by its populace. Alexander marched through Susiana, but as no mention is made of this city or of its ruins, though he must have passed close to its present site, there is good ground for believing that it could not have existed in his day; though Chesney is of opinion that the village of Agines, which is

mentioned as being 500 stadia from Susa, and through which Alexander passed with his army, was on the site of Ahwaz.

The modern town occupies but a small portion of the space covered by the ancient city on the eastern bank of the Karoon, and exhibits a mean appearance contrasted with the immense mass of ruins that rears its rugged head in the rear. Its houses are built entirely of stone brought from the ruins, and it boasts the possession of only one decent building, a mosque, apparently of modern erection. The population was estimated by Sir Arnold Kemball in 1857 at some 3,000, though Major Mignan computed it a few years before at 12,000 souls. An old ruinous stone wall, some of the blocks in which measure eight or ten feet in length, surrounds the town; in many places the wall is ten feet high, and nearly as much in breadth.

In the rear of the town is the remains of a bridge, and here too commences the vast mass of ruins extending at least ten or twelve miles in a south-easterly direction. All the mounds are covered with hewn stone, bricks, tiles, pottery, and heaps of circular flat stones, perforated in the centre, apparently for the purpose of grinding grain; no bitumen is observable on the bricks, hence denoting that this ancient city cannot lay claim to the antiquity of Babylon. Some of the mounds are of very great extent, and one measures upwards of 200 feet in height; 500 yards to the west of this

is a ruined edifice entirely of stone, measuring fifty feet in height by twenty in breadth, and having several flights of steps, which, though much mutilated, may be traced to the summit. About a mile to the east, separated by a deep ravine, stands an immense pile of materials, consisting of huge blocks of stone and brick, which the Arabs say is the remains of a palace; the height is over 100 feet from the plain below, and on the summit may be seen many stone foundations and pavements, together with several rounded troughs. The ascent to the summit is gradual, but fatiguing, from the numerous furrows which have been worn in its sides, apparently by water. One face of the pile is almost perpendicular; at the base some bushes of camel-thorn serve to relieve the general character of gloomy sterility that is worn by the surrounding landscape. This ruin is about three miles on the eastern bank of the river; 800 yards further on, in a northerly direction, is a conical mound, having a circumference of 500 feet, the sides exhibiting the remains of walls nine feet in thickness. Fifty yards in a direct line from this are seven square stone cisterns, sixteen feet long and proportionately deep, while close to them may be traced six or seven aqueducts, that lead from a ravine which probably conducted water to these cisterns. On regarding all these remains of a by-gone greatness, one cannot but reflect on the engineering skill and energy of will exhibited by the race who made this howling wilderness

to "blossom like the rose," and on the apathy and imbecility that characterizes the present people, the inheritors of a mighty past!

Mignan gives a detailed account of the ruins of Ahwaz, extending on the western banks of the river explored by him, but I will not try the patience of my readers by a description of them.

And now for a short account of the expedition that has rendered the name of Ahwaz famous in Indian history. Three days after the bombardment and capture of the great Persian stronghold of Mohamrah, Sir James Outram, the Commander-in-chief, resolved to send a force against Ahwaz, at which place a quantity of stores had been collected by the enemy, and where a considerable portion of his scattered army had been concentrated. Accordingly, Commodore Rennie of the Indian Navy was entrusted with the chief command of a force consisting of three gunboats, six men-of-war launches, and 300 men of the 78th Highlanders and 64th Regiment, under Captain Hunt of the former corps. This force sailed up the Karoon without meeting with any opposition until their arrival close to the town, where crossing the river are two old broken down bunds or dams.

One of these is just opposite to the town and the other below it, and through them the water washes with great rapidity, rendering the passage by boats a matter of great difficulty. The river at the place of debarkation was from 90

to 100 yards wide, with several small islets in the middle, covered with the low tamarisk jungle. The banks of the rivers here are generally high, and the water so deep that the small steamers could lie close alongside.

At 3 a.m. on the 1st of April the little fleet left Oomarra, an Arab village on the left bank, where they had remained during the night. Soon after daylight the Persian army was found collected behind a ridge a few hundred yards above the right bank; it consisted of a crowd of horsemen, with some guns on the ridge, and a large force of infantry. On the flotilla anchoring about a mile and a half from this position, some horsemen came down, but retired on being received with a few rifle shots. It was now determined to land the 300 soldiers and advance up the left bank upon Ahwaz, with the object of destroying the enemy's depôt of grain and ammunition; in the event of finding them in force in the town, it was resolved that the advance should be turned into an armed reconnoissance, and the troops were to return to their ships. Meanwhile, a native craft, with a brass twelve-pounder, was captured. At 11 a.m. the troops commenced landing, and advanced at once in three columns, covered with skirmishers, the whole party being extended in such a formation that they looked like a large body of men. Captain Hunt of the 78th commanded and arranged it all. The two gunboats were sent off in advance up the river, and, taking up a position within shell

range of the enemy's ridge, opened fire. The enemy apparently had some guns in position on the ridge, but the moment the gunners made their appearance the gunboats opened and drove them away; they, consequently, did not return a single shot, though they kept up a musketry fire, which did no harm. In the meantime the troops pushed on; the Persians still collected, though in reduced numbers, at a distance of about 1,000 yards on the opposite bank of the river. At 12 o'clock the troops approached the town, when the Arab Sheikh came out, tendered his submission, and informed Captain Hunt that the enemy were retreating; on advancing, the staff-officers could see through their glasses the whole army, numbering 7,000 men, with a swarm of Bukhtearee horsemen and five or six guns, in full retreat from a British force of a few gunboats and 300 infantry The enemy retired in tolerable order, covered by their cavalry; the Shahzada, who commanded the Persian troops in person, travelling in a green palanquin carriage. The town, when occupied, was found to be filled with stores of flour, wheat, and barley, besides fourteen boxes, each containing ten new flint muskets with the Tower mark. A party was dispatched across the river to the enemy's camp, and destroyed the remains of their magazine, for the Arabs, like jackals, always hovering about where any "loot" is in the wind, had previously plundered it, carrying off nearly all the ammunition and arms.

Thus ended this successful day. Commodore Rennie remained two days at Ahwaz, and then returned with his gallant little force to join Sir James Outram.

XIII.

Ancient Ctesiphon, and Modern Baghdad.

WHILE serving in the Persian Gulf squadron, I was fortunate enough to receive an invitation from the then Surveyor-General of Mesopotamia to accompany him to Baghdad. This officer also commanded the Hon. East India Company's steamer Comet, an armed vessel placed in the Tigris for the purpose of protecting British interests in these parts, and for carrying despatches between the Indian Government and the Political Resident stationed at the capital of the Turkish Pashalic of which Mesopotamia forms a portion.

The Comet was a flat-bottomed steamer, carrying, for her size, a good battery of small ordnance, and one 32-pounder, and manned by a crew of some forty picked men. Such, however, was the respect in which the British flag was held in that distant part of Central Asia, that though she traversed the territories of perhaps the most turbulent tribe—the Montafik—of the most turbulent race in the world—the Arab,—

yet these wild Bedouins had not for many years before my visit attempted to attack the vessel. It was a picturesque sight to watch these wild descendants of Esau careering along the brink of the river on their superb steeds, with their flowing garments fluttering in the breeze behind them, and, while following the course of the man-of-war, shaking their spears in impotent wrath at us intruders on their desert solitudes.

And yet, though they often had the opportunity of attacking the Comet with almost any odds in their favour,—notably when the steamer was taking in wood at one of the stations where she replenished her "bunkers," while steaming up to Baghdad,—yet they knew well of old the stuff of which her gallant captain was made, and held their hands when their hearts must have burned with an avaricious desire to "loot" the little craft. I could tell, were I so minded, more than one tale of heroism in which Captain ——, of the Indian Navy, played the chief part; notably on one occasion when, to adopt the quaint lines of the ancient ballad of Chevy Chase,

> "For when with his leggis wear hewyne in to,
> Yet he knyled and fought on hys kne."

When beaten to the earth by a crowd of Bedouins, he continued to fight on his knees, with his sword broken near the hilt, and was left for dead on the field all night and until the following day, when a party of his seamen, returning to pay

the last honours to their brave captain, bore him back to his ship, from whence (after hovering on the brink of the grave for a lengthened period) he proceeded to England on sick leave. The scars of the sword-cuts he will carry to his grave; and the slugs from the fire-arms of his savage foe he bore embedded in his skull when I last saw him, thirteen years ago, —honourable mementoes of British pluck and endurance. But he also left his "mark" on some of his assailants.

No sooner had we passed the confluence of the Euphrates and Tigris, than, entering the latter river, we found ourselves upon classic ground, every mile of which disclosed to our eyes spots of world-wide fame.

Ancient Babylonia, the Aram-Neharaim or Padan-Aram of the Scriptures, the first independent kingdom in the world, was situated between the estuary of the Shatt-ul-Arab and the western extremity of the river Khabur, stretching, according to Chesney, from the neighbourhood of Erich to Babel, a distance of about 154 miles, and from thence to Kalneh, on the Khabur, 287 miles further. The kingdom extended eastward till it joined Assyria, including Accad and two other famous cities, called El Kush and Sippara, the latter supposed to be an antediluvian city, thus being almost conterminous with modern Mesopotamia. Assyria was originally of small extent, and the great warrior Asshur, mentioned in the tenth chapter of Genesis, built the capital, Nineveh, and the cities Rehoboth, Calah, and Resen. The wonders of the

former great city, situated on the left bank of the Tigris, have been in recent years laid bare by the indefatigable industry of Mr. Layard, and the ruins of the three latter have been discovered and identified by Sir Henry Rawlinson and other travellers. Assyria, when independent of Babylonia, extended along the east bank of the river Tigris, and was bounded on the south by Susiana and the Karoon river, the ancient Pasitigris, of which we have already made mention.

After leaving Bussorah in the little Comet, on our way to Baghdad, the first place of note we passed was Koorna, the ancient Apamea, situated at the extremity of the narrow delta of land formed by the junction of the rivers Tigris and Euphrates; it was so called by Seleucus Nicator, in honour of his wife Apama, the daughter of Artabazus, King of Persia, and though now an insignificant village, its former greatness is attested by the extensive ruins still existing.

One of the most interesting of the many ruins that line the banks of the Tigris above Koorna is that called the Tauk Kesra, or the King's Arch. This magnificent ruin is the sole remnant of Ctesiphon, the once mighty capital of the great Parthian Empire. Gibbon gives a full account of the rise and fall of Ctesiphon, which became the capital of Babylonia on the decadence of Seleucia, a city on the opposite bank of the Tigris, founded by Seleucus Nicator B.C. 300. Ctesiphon is rendered historically interesting from the fact that Trajan captured it A.D. 107, and that it sus-

tained numerous sieges by Roman emperors, as Severus and Julian, and by Odenatus, the husband of the famous Zenobia, Queen of Palmyra.

We landed near Tauk Kesra, and strolled up to see the ancient ruin. It consists of a stupendous arch nearly 90 feet high, by 82 feet broad at the base; from this arch extends, towards the rear, a chamber upwards of 150 feet in length, the roof of which has fallen in. As we wandered in this palace, one thought of the power and might of Chosroes Nushirwan, who, between the years 531 and 579, raised the Parthian Empire to the pinnacle of its greatness. As Gibbon writes of him: "Victorious and respected among the princes of Asia, he gave audience in his palace of Modain or Ctesiphon to the ambassadors of the world. Their gifts or tributes, arms, rich garments, gems, slaves, or aromatics, were humbly presented at the foot of his throne."

Further on, he vividly describes the dire events that brought about the downfall of the proud city; and, as we wandered through the silent archways, and crumbling evidences of human grandeur of a long bygone time, we perused with peculiar satisfaction that part of the historian's work in which he narrates the terrible incidents of the storm and pillage of the great palace, with its accumulation of barbaric wealth and splendid garnishings. Here, on this very spot, must have taken place the final onset of the irresistible hordes of the enemy, and there the king, the successor of Nushirwan,

might have made his last gallant stand for his kingdom. It was in the year of our Lord 637 that the Saracens effected the capture of Ctesiphon. Gibbon says: "The capital was taken by assault, and the tumultuous resistance of the people gave a keener edge to the sabres of the Moslems, who shouted with religious transport, 'This is the white palace of Chosroes! This is the promise of the apostle of God!' The poor robbers of the desert were suddenly enriched beyond the measure of their hope or knowledge. Each chamber revealed a new treasure, secreted with art, or ostentatiously displayed. The gold and silver, the various wardrobes and costly furniture, surprised (says Abulfeda) the estimate of fancy or numbers. One of the apartments of the palace was decorated with a carpet of silk, sixty cubits in length and as many in breadth; a paradise, or garden, was depicted on the ground; the flowers, fruits, and shrubs were imitated by the figures of the gold embroidery and the colours of the precious stones. The Arabian general persuaded the soldiers to relinquish their claim, in the reasonable hope that the eyes of the Caliph would be delighted with the splendour of the workmanship. Regardless of the merit of art and the pomp of royalty, the rigid Omar divided the prize among his brethren of Medina; the picture was destroyed, but such was the intrinsic value of the materials that the share of Ali alone was sold for 20,000 drams. The sack of Ctesiphon was followed by its desertion and gradual

decay. The Saracens disliked the air and situation of the place, and Omar was advised by his general to remove the seat of government to the western side of the Euphrates."

Buckingham describes the architecture and ornamentation of the wings of the magnificent arch of the Tauk Kesra in such detail, that I cannot do better than transcribe the passage: "The wings have their front divided into four stories, the lower one of which has large arched recesses and an arched doorway, each separated from the other by double convex pilasters or semi-columns, going up nearly half the height of the building, and including between their divisions separate compartments of three small recesses, each standing respectively over the larger arched recesses and arched doorway below. In the second story are double arched recesses, or two in one compartment, divided from each other by short pilasters, and every pair separated by a longer pilaster reaching to the summit of the building. Next follow, in the third story, compartments of three small concave niches, as if designed for shell or fan tops, each divided from the other by the long pilasters going to the top. And last of all, in the fourth story, is a continued line of still smaller arched niches, divided from each other by small double pilasters, the tops of which are now broken.

"Both the wings are similar in their general design, though not perfectly uniform; but the greater extent of the whole front with the broad and lofty arch of its centre, and the

profusion of recesses and pilasters on each side, must have produced an imposing appearance when the edifice was perfect."

Two miles above Koorna is a spot said to be the site of the Garden of Eden, though the present sterile nature of the soil would seem to belie the popular belief that identifies it with the delights of Eden as set forth in the sacred volume.

During the following day we passed a tomb which is called by the Arabs, Ozair. As the steamer made fast to the bank for the purpose of taking in a supply of wood, we landed, and inspected this ancient mausoleum. It consists of a square sepulchre with a dome on the top, and a good strong wall of sun-dried bricks surrounding the structure.

The tomb is said to contain the remains of the prophet Ezra, and the Jews who live at Baghdad and Bussorah perform annual pilgrimages to the sacred spot. The Arabs about here rob the pilgrims on their own account; and the wretched Jews, after paying black-mail to the Sheikh for protection, are mulcted again by these lawless freebooters.

There is a great sameness in the appearance presented by the banks of the Tigris. Growing in great profusion amongst the shrubs we found the root known in England as liquorice. A number of canals extend on both sides of the Tigris, but, like everything, the work of men's hands, in this part of the world, they are mostly choked up and left to decay.

Those branching off from the Euphrates are of greater importance. The late Lieutenant Bewsher, of the Indian Navy, who was for some time Surveyor of Mesopotamia, enumerates seven of them of respectable size, about seven to fifteen yards broad and from six to ten feet deep in the high season. These canals branch out into the centre of Mesopotamia, and the water is led away from them again until the parent stream—the once mighty Euphrates—is largely absorbed. The seven principal canals referred to above are farmed out by the Government, which receives some 150,000 rupees, or about £15,000 sterling, for them.

On the opposite side of the river to Ctesiphon is the site of the scarcely less famous city of Seleucia, built by Seleucus Nicator, the immediate successor of Alexander. Pliny states that its population was 600,000 souls. Long before Ctesiphon was thought of, Seleucia was formed on a Greek model; built with the object of causing the ruin of Babylon, it, in turn, decayed on the founding of Ctesiphon. Seleucia was raised on the site once occupied by a still more ancient city, at the mouth of a canal which once connected the Tigris and Euphrates,—the famous Nahar Malka mentioned by Pliny. Little, indeed, now remains to attest the grandeur of this renowned place. Time, violence, and repeated inundations have levelled every building, and literally nothing remains but mounds covered with rubbish. There is, indeed, a small remnant of a wall, and a few portions of

decayed brickwork. Mignan, in his interesting work of Travels in Mesopotamia, speaks of a relic of the past which he saw on the banks of the river. He says: "I have no hesitation in pointing to the fragment of a bridge which appears once to have connected the two cities, from the vast quantity of ruined materials lying in heaps on either bank, composed of fire-burnt bricks, made of argillaceous earth, and a great quantity of detached brickwork beneath the water. The shallowness of the river afforded me an opportunity of observing this very particularly, and induced me to procure the aid of divers, who immediately brought up bricks, broken and unbroken, remarkable for their hardness and solidity. Hence, I would infer that these fragments now resting in the river's bed could only have been appropriated to the purpose already mentioned."

Bishop Newton, in his work on the Prophecies, writing of the decadence and fall of Babylon, and the founding of Seleucia in its place, remarks: "Babylon never recovered its ancient splendour after it was taken by Cyrus, but upon the removal of the seat of empire from thence by the Persians, it by degrees decayed till it was at last reduced to an utter solitude. Berosus, in Josephus, says that Cyrus ordered the outer walls to be pulled down; the Persian kings ever regarded Babylon with a jealous eye. Darius Hystaspes, upon a revolt, greatly depopulated the place, lowered the walls, and demolished the gates. Xerxes

destroyed the temples; the building of Seleucia on the Tigris exhausted Babylon by its neighbourhood, as well as by the immediate loss of inhabitants taken away by Seleucus to people his new city; a king of the Parthians soon after carried away into slavery a great number, and destroyed the most beautiful parts of the city."

After wandering over the ground once covered by the dwellings of a busy and warlike race, we sat down on the banks of the stately river, on whose bosom are borne so many memories of the grand days of old. On either hand of us lay the silent remains of two vast and historic cities. The tuneful harmony of Byron's exquisite lines recurred to the memory as the wind, sighing through the fragile osiers that grew around us, seemed to bring on its wings the lament of the ancient Israelites,—

> "We sat down and wept by the waters
> Of Babel."

When the little Comet stopped to fill up with fuel, we used to go ashore with our fowling-pieces, and enjoy snipe or partridge shooting, with an occasional "pot" at a gazelle. There are larger quarry to be had if you have time to hunt them up, for occasionally, as we steamed up the stream, we espied a lion basking in the sun by the river's bank, whither his lordship had resorted to enjoy his midday siesta.

Every now and then a bend in the river would disclose to view an Arab encampment, than which, assuredly, nothing

can be imagined more picturesque and interesting. Sometimes, in spots where the dense brushwood was broken, we would see a group of Bedouin horsemen with their wives trudging along laboriously in the rear, carrying the children, or driving the cattle that were laden with the chattels. During our shooting excursions, also, we would come suddenly on a party of Arabs, who would scowl at us with a heartiness very suggestive of what they would do had we forgotten our minie rifles, or the guard of picked and resolute seamen we brought with us.

The Arab tribe which possesses the country lying between Baghdad and Bussorah, are called generally the Montafige or Montafik Arabs; under this name is comprehended a vast family of tribes, who all, however, acknowledge the authority of a head sheikh. It is said they can bring 70,000 armed men into the field, which is not at all improbable, as every male capable of bearing arms is a fighting man. The Turks could never have held the lands forming the pashalic "between the rivers," were it not that, with great cunning, they have always followed the policy of subsidising the Montafik, and thereby setting the different tribes of Bedouins by the ears. This plan has hitherto been successful, and the result is that they have maintained their power as the dominant race; whereas, did these Arabs only know their own military strength, and still more the Ottomite weakness, they might long since have driven from the classic

land of Mesopotamia the enfeebled race of sybarites who misgovern it. The Arabs have the most unmitigated contempt for the Turkish soldiers, and overcome them in combat; but your Bedouin cannot resist the influence of Turkish gold, and is as amenable to the mollifying effects of "palm-oil" as the most civilized Jew or Gentile.

The Arch of Kesra is visible on a clear day from Baghdad, from which, indeed, it is only distant some nineteen miles. After leaving the site of this interesting ruin, on turning a bend of the river, we sight the tall minarets and domes of the great capital of Mesopotamia. Before us lies Baghdad, the "city of the Caliphs." Like Moslem pilgrims, when they first descry in the hazy distance the glittering pinnacles of the sacred Kaaba in holy Mecca, we gaze with eager eyes on the object of so much longing curiosity; and most surely as the steamer advances slowly up the stream, we are not disappointed.

Situated in the midst of a vast desert, the city rises out of the plain as if by enchantment. It might be that one of the genii always associated with Eastern romance, had with a wave of his miracle-working wand, after the manner of such preternatural agents, caused it to rise out of the stony waste, only perhaps the next moment as mysteriously to disappear again, like the mirage of a flowing stream in the desert which lures the thirsty wayfarer on, to undeceive him at the moment he hopes to drink of its refreshing

waters. The appearance of Baghdad in the distance is striking in the extreme, and the sight of the palm trees mingled with the buildings, and relieving the eye with their bright and beautiful foliage, is beyond anything grateful to the senses after the monotonous sameness of the desert, only broken as it is by clumps of brushwood and camel-thorn.

On our arrival off the town, the captain and I landed at once, and lost no time in paying our respects to Captain K——, an officer of the Bombay artillery, now a colonel, and a knight of the Star of India. He was an intimate friend of the commander of the Comet, and I found him kind and affable. Captain K—— was much respected by the Baghdad community, both native and European; his hospitality was unbounded, and thoroughly Oriental; and whenever we wished to dine at the Residency we found a "knife and fork" always laid for us at the table of Her Majesty's representative. The "city of the Caliphs" has always been fortunate in having had scholars and gentlemen of high breeding to represent our Government at the Pasha's court; I need only instance Mr. Rich, so highly spoken of by all Oriental travellers for his courtesy and talents, and well known for his contributions to literature, and his gifts to the British Museum. The name of that distinguished soldier-statesman, Sir Henry Rawlinson, will also rise to the lips in connection with British interests at Baghdad, and scholarly attainments. Sir Henry built the present Resi-

dency, a fine mansion, which contains an excellent library, and a billiard-room fitted up with all the comforts and luxury of a West-end club.

There were a few English and foreign merchants resident here, some of them very good fellows. Among the guests I constantly met at the Residency was Dr. A. Sprenger, a noted German traveller and *savan*.

Baghdad is situated on both banks of the Tigris, the larger part being on the east side. There are no regular bridges, as the stream here is about 750 yards broad, but communication is kept up by a bridge of boats and by ferries. The town is surrounded by a wall which is strengthened at intervals by forts,—strong enough, indeed, to keep out a horde of Bedouin or Persian cavalry, but totally insufficient against artillery.

Some cannon of ancient manufacture are mounted in flanking towers, and the garrison is numerically strong enough to hold the place; but discipline is very lax in the ranks, and the soldiers are constantly embroiling themselves in rows with the citizens.

The same system of corruption that prevails at Constantinople, and indeed in every satrapy of the Sublime Porte, reigns supreme in the Pashalic of Mesopotamia. The people, though steeped in poverty, are ground down by heavy imposts, while the money thus raised is squandered in debauchery, or finds its way into the pockets of sub-officials;

the result is that trade languishes, and no improvements are carried out; whereas, were the money employed in works of utility, such as canals for irrigation, the whole country between the rivers, which is now little more than a desert, might be turned into a garden of plenty. One has only to turn to the pages of Herodotus to learn what wonderful fertility ancient Babylon possessed, owing to the perfect system of canals for irrigational purposes then in force.

The walls of Baghdad are about seven miles in circumference, though it must not be supposed that this encompasses only dwelling-places, for there are large spaces enclosed covered with groups of date palm and other vegetation. The most remarkable of the old buildings is the lofty minaret called Suk-el-ghuzl; while one of the most ancient is the Medresseh, or college, founded in the year of our Lord 1230, by Mostanser, a Caliph of the Abasside dynasty, 400 years before it fell into the hands of its present rulers.

During my stay at Baghdad we formed a party to inspect a famous ruin some eleven miles from the city, called Akar Kouf, and by the Arabs, Tull Nimrood, or the Hill of Nimrod. It is situated on the opposite bank of the river to that on which the British Residency stands, so we had to cross over the bridge of boats, and then, taking horse, rode out to the spot. Akar Kouf is a vast and imposing ruin. It is constructed of sun-dried bricks, each about fourteen inches square and four inches thick. The mass appears to be

solid, is nearly square in shape, and forms an isolated structure 220 feet in height and 70 in diameter. Round it, and extending for some distance, are strewn the ruins of some ancient city. There is no record of the date of the construction of this vast pile, though, as its name implies, the legend is that the "mighty hunter" himself was the architect. After wandering about Akar Kouf, we set out on our return to Baghdad, purposing on our way to visit the tomb of Zobeida, the favourite wife of the renowned Haroun-el-Raschid, the hero of the "Thousand and One Nights." Passing through thick groves of palm trees, we arrived at the tomb, which is constructed on a gentle eminence in the midst of a large cemetery. It is of octagonal shape, about thirty feet in diameter, and surmounted by a conical-shaped superstructure, most elaborately ornamented. The tomb is in tolerably good repair, and this notwithstanding that it was erected more than a thousand years ago, and that the neighbouring city has been sacked and burnt a score of times since.

Baghdad contains about 100 mosques, but I was disappointed in their external appearance, while the interiors, like all Mohammedan temples, are remarkable for their rigid plainness, forming in this respect a marked contrast to the Hindoo places of worship, filled as they are with images and other gewgaws. There is a paved court outside, and from it a flight of steps leads to the entrance of the sacred building, which is usually about sixty feet high, and

square or octagonal in form; within the court is a fountain. A curtain hangs before the doorway, and on moving this you at once find yourself in a spacious room, the floor of which is carpeted, or else, during the hot weather, covered with matting. On the walls are inscribed a few sentences from the Koran. Above the centre rises the lofty dome, which is painted or covered with glazed tiles on the exterior. On the side nearest Mecca is a small hollow recess, and here the orisons of the faithful are offered up. Some of the mosques have four minarets or towers, one at each angle, from whence "the faithful" are called to prayer; some have two minarets, but the usual number is one. The "muezzins" mount up to the summit by means of a spiral staircase within the tower, and travellers and poets have dilated on the marvellous clearness with which their voices can be heard in the calm evenings high above the busy hum of a city.

The places that interested me most were the bazaars. It was very pleasant to lounge through them in the cool of the evening, and purchase some article—a Persian carpet, or a kaliune or pipe, or some other Oriental speciality.

I was fortunate enough to visit Baghdad in the cold season, but the heat of the place in the summer is almost insupportable, often rising to 120° Fahrenheit in the shade.

During this season the natives retire to the underground cellars, called "serdaubs," with which all houses are provided. In the evening the family adjourns to the roof, where every

one also sleeps. The dwellings are all quadrangular, and present a dead wall to the passer-by, so that it is not very lively work walking along the narrow lane with its offensive smells, which does duty for a street. There are four quadrangles in the houses of the well-to-do classes, the outer one being occupied by the servants. The interior of the dwellings of the merchants, as well as of officials, are often very luxuriously furnished. One Armenian whom I used to visit had his walls inlaid with the most costly mirrors, ornamented with mother-o'-pearl, while the ceilings were embellished with carved wood-work. On the divans arranged round the room were laid crimson velvet cushions worked with gold and silver thread, while the most expensive Turkish carpets covered the floors, rendering the footfall inaudible.

Baghdad has been frequently ravaged by the plague, and you would not wonder at it considering the utter want of all sanitary precautions. In 1831 this fearful disease raged with such violence that, according to the account of Lieut. Wellsted, of the Indian Navy, who visited the city in that year, out of 150,000 inhabitants only 20,000 survived the visitation; part of this extraordinary mortality was, however, attributable to the floods, and to the capture of the ill-fated city by the Sultan's troops, who barbarously massacred the Mameluke garrison.

Among the chief objects of note in Baghdad are the numerous khans or caravanserais, though they are not so

handsome or spacious as in Persia. As these "khans" are very characteristic of the mode of life of Oriental races, and are not to be found in India, I will, at the risk of incurring the imputation of repeating what so many travellers have already described, give a general description of them.

Caravanserais are edifices admirably adapted for the purpose of giving shelter to both man and beast. There is only a single entrance, generally a handsome Saracenic gateway, and this leads into the interior space, which is quadrangular, and open to the sky. Round this there is a piazza, and numerous double rooms with arched fronts, each pair consisting of an inner and outer apartment, as well as vaulted stables in the rear. A fountain occupies the centre of the quadrangle, and around it, or on the broad colonnade, the merchants pile their wares in separate heaps. The scene around is animated. Groups of men from distant climes are sipping their coffee, smoking their long pipes, or, perhaps, improving the opportunity by driving a hard bargain, which the Oriental man of business knows so well how to do.

Khans are usually built two stories high, and are strongly constructed of stone; the staircases are at the angles of the walls, and lead to the roof of the building, which is flat. Here, as in the private houses, the travellers make their beds in the warm weather. There is not much making required, for, as it consists of a mat, a sheet, and, if you are of luxu-

rious habits, a pillow, it does not take the time which housemaids consume every morning in England in punching and then smoothing the refractory featherbed and bolster. Every sleeper merely rolls up his mat, takes up his pillow and sheet, and walks down the staircase and out of the hospitable building, after first saying his prayers with his face turned towards Mecca, performing his morning ablutions, and paying a trifling gratuity to the khanji, or keeper of the khan, who makes his income chiefly by supplying fodder for the cattle sheltered in the edifice.

Speaking of the acuteness of the vendors and purchasers of articles in the bazaars, reminds me of an amusing scene I once witnessed. We were wandering through the chief bazaar one evening, and admiring the animated appearance it presented with its crowds of different nationalities—Persians, Koords, Turks, moving gravely about in their picturesque dresses; also Jews and Arabs, passing in and out of the numberless coffee-houses and shops, all of which had their complement of smoking owners and guests, sitting cross-legged and smoking in dignified silence, or trusting that the mollifying influences of the "kaliune" would form the medium for a good stroke of business,—when our attention was directed to the bargaining in progress between a shopkeeper and his customer, as shrewd-looking an individual as himself, who was seated beside him on a small piece of matting inside the shop, and with evident self-satisfaction

had gone through the preliminary operation of "blowing a cloud," and drinking a cup of coffee with the personage who proposed to fleece him. However, in this instance, it was a case of "diamond cut diamond." The customer was no young man from the country, but on his host opening the negotiation by asking some exorbitant sum, coolly offered something between one-half and one-third the price demanded for the article in question. The tradesman laughed satirically at him, and asked, in a bitter tone of sarcasm, whether he thought he (the shopkeeper) had stolen it. After a little more loud-toned and angry haggling, which between Europeans, or at all events Englishmen, would have been the speedy precursor of a fight, the inflexible customer calmly walked out of the shop. He was suffered to depart but a short distance, for the avaricious tradesman followed him, flourishing in his hand the handsome dyed mat, the cause of all this hard swearing. After appealing to Mohammed as to his integrity, he concluded by a "Mashallah! you shall have it at your price." And the dollars forthwith changed hands.

The shops are all open to the streets, as little fear is entertained of robbers, and are only raised a couple of feet above the roadway; hence, passing friends can converse with the inmates from the outside.

The women seldom appear in the streets except when going to pay a visit to female friends, and are always

shrouded from head to foot: nought but their eyes can be seen peering through the thin veil of white muslin or horsehair.

The Armenians form, perhaps, the most wealthy portion of the community, and dress very handsomely. The complexion of their women is very fair, and in early womanhood they are extremely pretty, but they soon grow obese, and, owing to early marriages and the sedentary lives they lead, lose their good looks and the freshness of youth when still young.

The Turks, who form the official section of the upper classes, also dress handsomely. They wear heavy turbans of muslin, and of every variety of colour tastefully blended. The outer garment is ample and flowing, generally of purple or scarlet silk, and confined round the waist by a costly Cashmere shawl. Over this is thrown a loose cloth cloak, called a "chogah," which is not suffered to conceal the hilt of a dagger ornamented with jewels. Their lower garments are loose breeches, or "paijamas," also composed of parti-coloured silk. The costume is completed by shoes of bright yellow leather, with pointed toes.

The Persians dress more plainly, and their sombre appearance and restless manner makes, in a crowd, a striking contrast to the lordly and dignified Turk.

We had frequent occasion to make use of the boats employed on the Tigris. As they are, like most things in this

interesting region, of peculiar construction, and the same, in some instances, as mentioned by Herodotus more than 2,000 years ago, a short description of them is necessary. In certain parts of the upper waters of the Tigris and Euphrates, the natives cross the river by means of two inflated sheep or goat skins, fastened to one another simply by a couple of hoops. The ordinary "kellek," or raft, is about eighteen feet long and fourteen wide, and is supported by some thirty skins, which are inflated with air, and are so arranged that they can be replenished at will. On these is laid the floor, constructed of layers of branches arranged at right angles. Over this platform, again, planks are placed, and the whole, being bound together by wicker-work, is ready for the reception of stores and merchandize. A little fireplace of clay is built on this flooring, and the passengers manage to live very comfortably, and travel considerable distances on such primitive structures.

There are also circular boats, "kufahs," made of willows plaited together, just like baskets, over a circular framework of stout materials. The "kufahs" are covered with bitumen, which renders the vessel perfectly water-tight. They are usually about six or eight feet in diameter, of shallow draught, and capable of carrying seven persons. Some are made only four feet in diameter, and some again, intended to transport camels and other beasts of burden, are no less than fifteen feet across. The "kufahs" are paddled or spun

along with a circular motion. This description of boat, which was minutely described by the "father of history" before the Christian era, is very similar to those used by our forefathers in ancient Britain, and known as corracles; it is very probable that they were introduced from these eastern countries.

There is, again, the "bellem," or canoe, which has already been described, and a large singular-shaped vessel called the "donak," with a flat bottom and peculiar bows and stern. These extremities rise crescent-like, high above the gunwale, or have, what seamen call, a "great sheer." Towards the middle of the boat the gunwale falls out, giving a flat floor to carry heavy cargoes. High up in the stern stands the "naquidah," or helmsman.

A disagreeable feature of the streets of Baghdad are the crowds of dogs which are to be found at all hours of the day or night perambulating the thoroughfares; ferocious, masterless, and withal, as to their shaggy coats, "out-at-elbow," these curs present an unprepossessing appearance as they slouch about the narrow lanes in a purposeless, desultory sort of way, as if ashamed of their manifest ill-breeding—for they are called "pariah" or "pye" in the East, and every scurvy-looking fellow is stigmatized as a pariah, as the *ne plus ultra* of scorn. Yet you would do grave injustice to these wretched specimens of the canine species were you hastily to conclude they were of no use in the economy of Baghdad. Far from it.

In this benighted land, where municipal commissioners or inspectors of nuisances are luxuries not yet imported, these half-starved curs, which snap at the calves of your legs in a manner suggestive of hydrophobia, perform the part of scavengers. Without them the reeking highways and byways would be too unsavoury even for the olfactory nerves of a Turkish official.

The Pasha's palace, though of great size, is a mean-looking building; attached to it is the quarter where the stud of horses is kept; some of them are of immense value, and of the purest Arabian breed.

We frequently made short excursions about the vicinity of Baghdad. Everywhere throughout Mesopotamia the traveller stumbles across the mounds which mark the remains of ancient cities, some with histories whose every trace is lost in the distant past, while those of others are so involved in the obscurity of tradition, that the antiquarian and historian are alike perplexed in their endeavours to discriminate the mythological from the historical. Venerable are these mighty ruins with the "hoar of innumerable ages"; millions, at some distant period of the world's history, dwelt within these lonely ruins. The extent and completeness of the solitude is positively oppressive to the traveller who has read aught of the history of the ancient races and mighty kingdoms that once flourished in the country between the rivers. How could the moralist soliloquize, and the philosopher

dilate on fallen greatness, while sitting, like another Marius, amid the ruins of cities more vast and powerful than was ever Carthage in her prime. Here, where great kings held their courts with Oriental pomp and state, the owls hoot, and the bats, like ghosts of the departed, issue out at dead of night and flap their noisome wings in the face of the unfrequent visitant. The voice of "singing men and singing women," that once resounded here in mirthful or voluptuous swell, are silent; silent also is the busy hum of the myriad citizens who once ministered to the wants of the luxurious lords of these proud palaces. Now the very sites of the stately edifices of these powerful ones of the earth can be traced only by the mounds, or "tuls," which, like milestones, denote the path between the two rivers.

My visit to Baghdad was cut rather shorter than I could have wished by the arrival of news of disagreements between our Government and that of the Shah of Persia; and as the Resident thought that the presence of the captain of the Comet might be required at Bussorah, for the purpose of bringing up despatches to Baghdad, the little steamer was placed under orders to return to the former port without delay. On the following day, therefore, I bade adieu to Captain K—— and all the friends whose hospitality I had enjoyed, and before night we were steaming down the broad and turbid bosom of the noble Tigris. We soon reached Bussorah, where my ship was lying, and then regretfully I

took leave of my friend the captain of the Comet. It is not many years since he retired from his post. A most hospitable host I found him; his house was ever open to all those eastern travellers who have, during recent years, set foot in Baghdad, and a cabin on board his ship to those who were desirous of returning to England *viâ* the Persian Gulf, or of further prosecuting their researches to the southward.

What Baghdad will be like, say twenty years hence, when the Euphrates Valley Railway scheme is a *fait accompli*, it is curious to conjecture. Probably the march of improvement will level its walls with the dust, destroy its houses, and dirty, narrow, delightfully cool streets, or rather lanes, erecting in their stead macadamized thoroughfares, with the luxury of lighting and paving rates, and in all likelihood, Indian bungalows for the wealthy to reside in, instead of the present buildings, with their quadrangular courtyards, flat roofs, and underground cellars for the hot season.

No more then will be seen the dirt and the concomitant beggars, who look, some of them, for all the world, like so many impersonations of Belisarius, the mighty warrior who was fain to sit bareheaded at the city gate, and adjure the passers-by not to forget fallen greatness. "*Date obolum Belisario*," might the first beggar I set eyes on in Baghdad, conveniently deposited near the landing-place, have said to me; and, having regard to his long flowing beard and venerable

appearance, I should not have felt the least surprised. But with the extradition of all mendicants, religious and lay, and the imposition of rates and taxes, our modern renovators will abolish all such non-utilitarian things as romance and picturesqueness. In place of endless strings of camels defiling out of the ancient and historic gateways—we are told that the mother of Motassim, the last of the Abassides line of caliphs of Baghdad, performed the pilgrimage to Mecca with 120,000 camels—and the voice of the "mahouts" urging the patient animals, with invocations to Allah, to mend their place, will be seen the bright Birmingham brass-work of a brand-new locomotive, and will be heard the restless snort of the engine as it emerges from under the archway of a railway station, with the stuccoed front with which all Londoners are so familiar since the rage for metropolitan architectural improvements has set in. As we look out of the window of our comfortable *coupé*, we shall hear the not less familiar voice of the porters bawling out the word Baghdad, while the engine, with a preliminary whistle that recalls to Brown, Jones, or Robinson, "taking a run" over the East, the rural delights of Highgate and Hackney, goes puffing and clanking through the desert solitudes and oases of date trees, from which have disappeared for ever the flying burnous of the matchless horsemen as they were wont to career over the plain, and the burnished spear once handled so deftly by the Arab chivalry, but now rusting

in unwarlike disuse on the walls of the paternal and suburban mansion of the "*ingenuus puer*" on a "tower," as Sam Slick would say; or "doing Mesopotamia, my dear boy," as that youth would put it, in the slangy phraseology dear to his Cockney heart.

He would be a bold man who can say I am drawing an improbable picture of what is in store for Baghdad, since the railway engineers have driven a line through the prairie solitudes of the North American continent. The charm of Cairo, that most picturesque of Oriental cities, is gone, and who knows how soon the same fate may overtake the capital of the good Caliph Haroun-al-Raschid?

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